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ORVILLE COLLEGE.

FROM ROUTLEDGE'S "MAGAZINE FOR BOYS."

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

ORVILLE COLLEGE.

A Story.

BY

MRS. HENRY WOOD,

AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE," "THE CHANNINGS," "TREVLYN HOLD," "ST. MARTIN'S EVE," "ELSTER'S FOLLY," ETC.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:
TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.
1867.

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250. n. 153

LONDON:
WYMAN AND SONS, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, W.C.

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ORVILLE COLLEGE.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE PLANTATION.

THE glowing sunset of a September evening was shining on the fair grounds around Orville College, lighting up the scene of stir and bustle invariably presented on the return of the boys to their studies after the periodical holidays. A large, comfortable-looking, and very irregular building was this college. But a moderate-sized house originally, it had been added to here, and enlarged there, and raised yonder, at different times as necessity required, and with regard to convenience only, not to uniformity of architecture. The whole was of red brick,

save the little chapel jutting out at one end; *that* was of white brick, with black divisional strokes, as if the architect had a mind to make some distinction by way of reverence. The Head Master's house faced the lawn and the wide gravel carriage-drive that encircled it; the school apartments, ending in the chapel, were built on the house's left; the sleeping-rooms and domestic offices were on its right. It was only a private college—in fact, a school—founded many years ago by a Dr. Orville, and called after him; but it gradually became renowned in the world, and was now of the very first order of private colleges.

Situated near London, in the large and unoccupied tracts of land lying between the north and the west districts, when the college was first erected, nothing could be seen near it but green fields. It was in a degree isolated still, but time had wrought its natural changes; a few gentlemen's houses had grown up around, and a colony of small shops came with them. The latest improve-

ment, or innovation, whichever you like to call it, had been a little brick railway station, and the rushing, thundering trains, which seemed to be always passing, would occasionally condescend to halt, and pick up or set down the Orville travellers. In want of a name, when the houses spoken of began to spring up, it had called itself Orville Green—which was as good a name for the little suburb as any other.

Dr. Brabazon, the head master, stood at the door to receive his coming guests. It had been more consistent possibly with the reserve and dignity of a head master, to have ensconced himself in a state-chair within the walls of his drawing-room or library, and given the boys a gracious bow as each introduced himself. Not so the doctor. He was the most simple-mannered man in the world—as these large-hearted and large-minded men are apt to be,—and he stood at the hall door, or went to it perpetually, with a hearty smile and outstretched hands for each fresh arrival. A portly, genial man he, of near

sixty years, with an upright line of secret care on his brow that sat ill upon it, as if it had no business there.

The boys on this occasion came up, as was usual, to the front, or doctor's entrance; not to their own entrance near the chapel. The number of students altogether did not exceed a hundred. About forty of these were resident at the head master's; the rest—or nearly the rest—were accommodated at the houses of other of the masters, and a very few—eight or ten at the most—attended as out-door pupils, their friends living near. No difference whatever was made in the education, but these last were somewhat looked down upon by the rest of the boys. They arrived variously; some driven from town in their fathers' handsome carriages, some in cabs, some used the new rail and walked from thence, some had come by omnibus. Dr. Brabazon received all alike, with the same genial smile, the same cordial grasp of the hand. He liked all to make their appearance on the eve of school, that the roll

might be written and called: the actual business beginning on the morrow.

A pair of beautiful long-tailed ponies, drawing a low four-wheeled open carriage, came round the gravel sweep with a quiet dash. The driver was a well-grown youth, who had entered his eighteenth year. He had high, prominent features of an aquiline cast, and large sleepy blue eyes: a handsome face, certainly, but spoilt by its look of pride. His attention during his short drive—for they had not come far—had been absorbed by his ponies and by his own self-importance as he drove them. It was one of the senior boys, Albert Loftus. By his side sat another of the seniors, a cousin, Raymond Trace, a quiet-looking youth of no particular complexion, and his light eyes rather sunk in his head; eyes that he had a habit of screwing together when at his studies. He had been reading a book all the way, never once looking up at his cousin, or the road, or the ponies, and answering in civil monosyllables when spoken to. Behind sat another college

boy, younger, Master Dick Loftus. Master Dick possessed very little pride indeed, and was a contrast to his brother. He had amused himself, coming along, with a pea-shooter, and hung out a flag behind—all to the happy ignorance of the driver and Mr. Trace. A groom in plain livery, nearly bursting with suppressed laughter, made the fourth in the pretty carriage.

"Well, Loftus, I'm very glad to see you: you're rather late, though, considering you are so close," was the doctor's greeting. "How are you, Trace? Dick, you rebel, I hope we shall have no trouble this term."

The doctor laughed as he said it. Dick, a red-faced good-humoured boy, met the hand and laugh readily. He knew he was a favourite, with all his faults.

"Sir Simon's compliments to you, sir, and he will do himself the pleasure of calling shortly," said Mr. Loftus. "Dick, take those things away."

Mr. Loftus had slightly altered the phraseology of the message: "My respects to Dr.

Brabazon, and I'll give him a look in soon," was the one sent. The groom had been depositing a few things on the ground, and Dick was loading himself, when a close carriage drove in. A lady sat inside it in solitary state, and a young gentleman sat on the roof backwards.

"Halloa! It's Onions!"

The remark came from Mr. Dick Loftus. He dropped the things summarily, went out, and began a dance in honour of the new arrival. Loftus the elder seized on a square parcel done up in brown paper, and disappeared, leaving the other things to their fate. "Onions" got down by the chariot wheel, and shook hands with Dick.

They called him Onions as a sort of parody on his name, "Leek." The college was in the habit of bestowing these nicknames. Joseph Leek, at any rate, did not mind it, whatever others, thus distinguished, might do; he would as soon be called Onions as Leek, at any time. Nothing upset his temper or his equanimity. He was one of the coolest

boys that ever entered a school, and was a universal favourite. His father, General Leek, was in India; his mother, Lady Sophia, whom Dr. Brabazon was now assisting from the carriage, was an invalid in the matter of nerves, and always thankful to get her son to school again the first day of term.

The pony carriage drove off; Lady Sophia Leek's carriage was not long in following; other carriages, and cabs, and flies came up and went; and there was a lull in the arrivals. Dr. Brabazon was standing at his drawing-room window (a light pretty room on the right of the hall) and was trying to call to mind how many were still absent, when he saw some one else approaching, a small black travelling-bag in one hand, and dressed from head to foot in a suit of grey.

"Who's this?" cried he to himself. "It looks too tall for Gall."

Too tall certainly for Mr. Gall, who, though the senior boy of the college, was undersized. And too old also. This gentleman looked two or three-and-twenty; a slender man of

middle height, with pale, delicate features, and a sad sort of look in his pleasant dark eyes.

"It must be the new German master," thought Dr. Brabazon: and he hurried out to meet him.

The new German master it was, Mr. Henry. There was a peculiar kind of timid reticence in his manner which seemed foreign to himself, for his face was a candid, open face, his voice frank. Dr. Brabazon put it down to the natural shyness of one who has resided abroad. Mr. Henry, of English birth, had been chiefly educated in Germany. He spoke German as a native, French also: for some few years he had been a professor at the University of Heidelberg, and had come thence now, strongly recommended to Dr. Brabazon.

"I am very glad to see you," said the doctor, taking his hand in his simple, cordial manner. "Welcome to England! I have been expecting you since the morning."

"We had a bad passage, sir; the boat was

late by many hours. It was due at ten this morning, but we only got in an hour or two ago."

The words were spoken without any foreign accent. Not only that: the tone was that of a refined Englishman. The fact gave satisfaction to Dr. Brabazon, who liked his pupils to be surrounded by good associations in all ways.

"Will you kindly tell me where I am to lodge?"

"Here, for a few days," said Dr. Brabazon. "As you were so complete a stranger, we thought you might like best to fix, yourself, upon lodgings. It is some years since you were in England, I think?"

"Nine years, sir."

"Nine years! Dear me! You have not many friends, then, I conclude, in your own country?"

Mr. Henry shook his head. "Few men are much more friendless than I am."

And the accent sounded friendless. There was something singularly attractive about

this young man, in his gentle manner, his sensitive, shrinking shyness (for so it seemed), his sad, earnest brown eyes: and Dr. Brabazon's heart went out to him.

"You shall be shown your room, Mr. Henry," he said, "and then my daughter will give you some tea."

Later, Dr. Brabazon took him through the passages, on either side of which were rooms appropriated to particular studies, to the lofty hall, which was the chief school-room. A long room, with high windows on one side of it; the masters' desks in the angles of the room, and the long desks of the boys ranged against the sides. Dr. Brabazon's place was at the upper end, in the centre, facing the door, so that he commanded full view of all. Three masters lived in the house: the Reverend Mr. Jebb; Mr. Baker, the mathematical master; and Mr. Long, who took English generally, some of the natural sciences, and was supposed to superintend the boys out of hours. Mr. Jebb assisted Dr. Brabazon with the classics, and

the latter took divinity. The other masters lived out. Dr. Brabazon introduced Mr. Henry to the clergyman and Mr. Long, and left him. Mr. Baker was not there.

The boys were renewing private friendships, telling tales of their holidays, hatching mischief for the coming term, criticising a few new-comers, and making a continuous hum. Their ages varied from ten to eighteen. On the whole, they seemed a rather superior set; for one thing, the terms were high, and that tended to keep the school select.

A sudden "Hiss-is-s," from the lips of Master Richard Loftus—or, as he was called in the school, Loftus minor — suppressed almost before it was heard, caused the group, of whom he was the centre, to look round.

"What is it, Dick?"

"Don't you see?" whispered Dick. "A nice amount of brass *he* must have, to show himself here again! Look at him, Onions; he looks more of a sneak than ever."

Onions lifted his eyebrows in his cool, but not ill-natured manner, as he surveyed the

boy coming in. It was Edwin Lamb. His hair was of a glowing red, and his eyes had a kind of look as if they were not quite straight. Not for that did the boys dislike him, but because he had been found out in one or two dishonourable falsehoods: they brought it out short, "lies:" and was more than suspected of carrying private tales to Mr. Long. They called him "Le Mouton," "the Sneak," "Jackal," and other pleasant names. In short, there was a great amount of prejudice against him; more, perhaps, than the boy really deserved.

"Don't let any fellow speak to him! Don't let's——"

"Hold your tongue, Loftus minor. Allow bygones to be bygones. Time enough to turn against Lamb when you find fresh cause."

The rebuke, spoken civilly, came from Raymond Trace, who happened to overhear the words, and who never willingly offended anybody. Not that Trace was a favourite in the college; none of them liked him much, without being able to explain why. Dick Loftus

turned with a quick, scared look, wondering whether Mr. Trace had also overheard a private colloquy he had been holding with a very chosen companion, Tom Smart. He did not answer Trace; as a rule the younger fellows had to obey the seniors.

At the sound of a bell, they began to hurry into a small place, called the robing-closet, where their caps and gowns were kept. Putting on the gowns, and carrying the caps in their hands, they went to the call-room, waiting there to be marshalled into chapel. The caps, or trenchers, were used always; the gowns were worn in chapel and on what might be called state occasions, such as the examinations, also at lectures; sometimes they wore them out of doors, but not in school ordinarily, nor when they were at play. The masters' gowns, worn always in public, were of the same make as the boys': the caps were all alike in form, but the masters' were distinguished by a scarlet tassel in addition to the black one.

It was a small pretty chapel, the size of an

ordinary room, the lectern slightly raised, and a standing desk for the lessons. The senior boys, meaning those of the first desk, read the lessons in turn. Part of the service was intoned, part read, part sung. Mr. Long, a good musician, took the organ to-night, and Dr. Brabazon, as was mostly usual, was in the reading desk. Mr. Loftus, as first senior present, left his place to read the first lesson. He read very well; clearly and distinctly, though somewhat coldly. Raymond Trace read the second lesson. His voice was subdued; its accent to some ears almost offensively humble—offensive because there was a ring in it of affected piety that could never be genuine. No such voice as that, no such assumption of humility, ever yet proceeded from a truly honest nature.

"That young man is a hypocrite!" involuntarily thought the new master, Mr. Henry. "Heaven forgive me!" he added, a moment after; "what am I that I should judge another?"

He did not know the name of the reader;

he did not know yet the name of any one of the boys surrounding him ; but he had been studying their faces, as it was natural he should do, considering that he had come to live amongst them. Instinct led Mr. Henry to study the human countenance—to be studying it always, unconsciously ; and he was rarely deceived in it.

On ordinary evenings the supper was served immediately after they came out of chapel ; but on this, when neither things nor scholars had shaken down into their routine, there appeared no signs of its being ready. Several of the fellows were expected yet, and the discipline, obtaining customarily, had not commenced. Two of them, at any rate, took some undue advantage of it. Going out after chapel was against the rules ; perhaps Mr. Dick Loftus considered he might, on this night, break it with impunity.

Hanging up his gown in its place, he went stealing along the passages again towards the chapel, carrying a brown paper parcel, which he tried to cover with his trencher, lest

curious eyes might be about. His friend Smart went stealing after him, and they turned off through a door into an open quadrangle; on three sides of which ran a covered gallery or passage, with a brick floor and Gothic pillars, called the cloisters; on the fourth side were the great gates that formed the scholars' entrance. A truck of luggage was coming in from the railway station; Dick and the other slipped past it.

Now what had these two got in that parcel, guarded with so much care? Mischief, you may be sure. It was the parcel that Loftus major had picked up on his arrival, and taken off to his room; and it contained nothing less than a pair of pistols. Mr. Loftus had recently purchased these pistols; he thought their acquisition one of the greatest feathers his cap could display, and he had not resisted the temptation to take them with him to show his compeers. Of course some secrecy had to be observed, for Dr. Brabazon would as soon have allowed him to bring a live bear into the college, and the case they lay in had

been well wrapped in wadding, and otherwise disguised. Loftus minor, Mr. Dick, who was burning to finger these pistols, and had not yet obtained the ghost of a chance to do it, thought he saw it on this evening. He found out where his brother had placed them, brought them down, hid them while he went into chapel, made a confidant of Smart, and the two stole out with them. They had no particular motive in taking the pistols abroad, except that there was little opportunity for a private leisurely view indoors.

Crossing the wide road, they plunged into what was called the plantation: a large plot of ground intersected with young trees; or, rather, trees that had been young, for they were getting of a sheltering size now. A cricket-field lay to the left, beyond the chapel end-window; the station was in the distance; houses were dotted about; none, however, in the immediate vicinity. It was a beautiful moonlight night; and the boys chose an open place amid the trees, where there was a bench, and the beams were bright. There they

undid the parcel, and touched the spring of the box.

Bright beams beyond doubt; but not so bright to the four admiring eyes as the pistol barrels. Never had such pistols been seen, although Loftus major—as Mr. Dick communicated in open-hearted confidence—had only given an old song for them at some pawnbroker's. They lifted, they touched, they stroked, they cocked, they took aim. The caps were on; and it was only by an amount of incomprehensible self-denial, that they did not fire. But that might have betrayed all; and Dick Loftus, though daring a great deal in a harmless sort of way, did not dare that. Dick fenced with the one, Smart with the other; they were like a couple of little children, playing with make-believe swords.

All in a moment, Dick caught sight of a trencher, poking itself gingerly through the trees, and regarding them. A master's trencher, too, for the two tassels, one over the other, were distinctly visible. With a

smothered cry of warning to his companion, Dick vanished, carrying his pistol with him. Smart, nearly beside himself with terror when he comprehended the situation, vanished in Dick's wake; but in his confusion he dropped his pistol into the sheet of wadding on the bench.

The coast clear, the spy (an unintentional spy, it must be confessed) came forward. It was not a master; it was one of the boys, who, in coming out, had unwittingly caught up a master's trencher in mistake for his own. He took up the pistol and examined it—he turned over the wadding on which it lay, and the brown paper, and the case; scrutinizing all carefully in the moonlight, and coming on a written direction at last.

"Oh, indeed! 'Albert Loftus, Esquire'! What does he want with pistols? Is he thinking to shoot any one of the fellows? And Mr. Dick has stolen a march on him, and brought them out, has he?"

He took up the pistol, looked at it again, critically held it for a minute before him; then

took aim, and fired it off. The answer to this was a human cry and a fall; the charge —shot or bullet, which ever it might be— had taken effect on some one but a few paces off. The culprit remained perfectly still for one minute, possibly scared at what he had done; he then quietly put the pistol on the case, crept off on tiptoe amidst the trees, and ——came face to face with the new master, Mr. Henry.

Mr. Henry was on his road to the station to order his luggage to the college. He had left it on his arrival, not knowing where he was to lodge. Dr. Brabazon had offered to send a servant, but Mr. Henry coveted the walk in the cool, lovely night; he and his head were alike feverish from the effects of the sea voyage; so they directed him through the plantation, as being the nearest way.

Face to face. But only one glimpse did Mr. Henry catch of the meeting face, for the boy's hand was suddenly raised to cover it, even while he took flight. A moan or two, and then a loud shout for assistance—as if

the sufferer, on second thoughts, deemed it would be better to shout than to groan—guided Mr. Henry to the spot. He was lying close by, in an intersecting path of the plantation, a boy of some sixteen years, whose trencher showed he belonged to Orville College.

"Who is it?" asked Mr. Henry.

"Talbot," shortly answered the boy. "I say, though, who are you? How came you to shoot me?"

"It was not I who did it. I heard the shot as I came up. Where are you hurt?"

"In my leg, I think. I can't move it. I only got in by this train, for I missed the one in the afternoon, and was running through here, full pelt, when somebody takes a shot at me! Cool, I must say!"

The master raised him, but the right leg seemed nearly helpless, so he laid him down again, and ran to the college for assistance. But as Mr. Henry was turning away, the white wadding on the bench caught his eye, and he found the pistol and its accessories. These he carried with him.

Dick Loftus, hiding in the distant trees, could bear the suspense no longer. Something was wrong; some untoward event had occurred; and he came forward in disregard of Smart's prayers and entreaties. Dick was of an open honourable nature, in spite of his pursuit of mischief and his impulsive thoughtlessness: he never hesitated to take his escapades on himself, when real necessity arose.

"I'm blest! Why, it's the earl!" he shouted out. "Smart! Smart! come here. It's the Earl of Shrewsbury!"

"Is that you, Dick?" exclaimed the wounded boy, looking up as Dick bent over him in the moonlight. "Did you do it?"

"No, I didn't," said Dick. "I say, old fellow, is it much! I wish his pistols had been buried before I'd brought 'em out!"

"How was it all? Whose are the pistols?" questioned Talbot. And Mr. Dick, in an ecstasy of contrition, but vowing vengeance against the shooter, whoever it might be, entered on his explanation. To do him jus-

tice, he gave it without the least reserve. And Tom Smart, shivering amid the thickest trees, at a safe distance, daring to stir neither one way nor the other, lest he should be seen, and who had not heard the salutation, wondered whether Dick would keep his word, and not mention his name in connection with the calamity.

A fine commotion arose in the college when Mr. Henry got back with the news. One of the gentlemen had been shot in the plantation!—shot by a fellow student! It was incredible. Mr. Henry, breaking away from the throng, quietly gave Dr. Brabazon an account of the whole, as far as he was cognizant of it: how that he had heard a shot quite close to him, followed by a cry, and had caught a glimpse of a youth stealing away. He gave no clue as to who the youth was; apparently did not know; and of course could not know positively that it was he who had fired; he recognized him as belonging to Orville College by the cap. It was but a hurried explanation; there was no time to

waste in question and answer; Talbot must be seen to.

He was brought in on a hurdle, and a surgeon summoned. On the first day of this boy's entrance at the college, when Dr. Brabazon, the roll before him, asked his name, the answer was, "James Talbot." "James Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury?" jokingly responded the doctor, in allusion to one noted in English history; and from that hour Talbot had gone by no other name in the school. Of a good-natured, generous disposition, he was ever ready to do a kind action, and was liked immensely. Not that he had much to be generous with in one sense: his father was a banker's clerk; very poor; struggling with life; and pinching himself in all ways to keep his son at Orville.

Not during the first confusion did a suspicion, that the offending pistol could have any connection with a certain brown paper treasure-parcel upstairs, penetrate to the brain of Loftus major: not until Dick's name arose into prominence. Up to his room stepped

Mr. Loftus, six stairs at a stride, pulled open a drawer, essayed to lay his hands upon the parcel, and—found it was not there. He could not believe his own eyes; he stared, he felt, he stood in a mazed sort of bewilderment. Meddle with *his* things! that wretched Dick, who was nearly three years his junior, and held at arm's-length accordingly!—with his new pistols, that were only brought en cachette! When Loftus major recovered his equanimity sufficiently to think, he came to the conclusion that hanging would be too good for Dick.

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW BOY.

THE Rev. Mr. Jebb and the new German master stood over the bed of James Talbot. The surgeon had been busy; he had extracted the shots from the leg, and pronounced the injury to be not material. Talbot must be kept quiet, he said, both in mind and body.

"It's a very strange affair," murmured the clergyman into Mr. Henry's ear. "Dr. Brabazon's opinion is, that it must have been Loftus minor, after all, who fired off the pistol."

"It never was, then," unceremoniously spoke up the patient. "When Dick Loftus says he didn't do a thing, I know he *didn't*."

"You are not to talk, Talbot," interrupted Mr. Jebb: and the two gentlemen moved away from the bed. Mr. Henry began to ask who Dick Loftus was.

"He is brother to the second senior of the school," was the clergyman's reply. "You may have remarked Loftus major in chapel, from the circumstance that he read the lesson."

"Which of the lessons? I noticed the readers of both."

"The first lesson. The second was read by Trace."

"Trace?" echoed Mr. Henry.

"You are thinking it an uncommon name. Raymond Trace; he is cousin to the Loftus boys. There's quite a romance attaching to their history," proceeded the clergyman, who was a bit of a gossip, and he dropped his voice as he spoke. "The two fathers were in partnership in Liverpool, stock and share brokers, quite a first-class house, and much respected. Unfortunately they took in a partner, and before two years were over he

ruined them. He issued false shares, put forged bills in circulation—I hardly know what he did not do. They were quite ruined; at least, it was ruin compared to what their former wealth had been. The house was broken up; all its debts were paid; and Mr. Loftus retired to the Isle of Wight upon a small private property. He had lived there previously, never having taken a very practical part in the business. The other partner, Mr. Trace, went abroad, hoping to carve out a second fortune. I hear he is doing it."

"And these are the sons?" observed the German master, after a pause.

"These are the sons. Mr. Loftus has several children, Mr. Trace only this one. Mrs. Loftus and Mrs. Trace were sisters. Their brother, Sir Simon Orville, a retired city man, lives here close to the college; he is some distant relative of its founder. The three boys were placed at it two years ago, and it is thought Sir Simon pays for them. They spend their vacations generally at

his house: Trace always does. He has no other home in England: Mrs. Trace is dead."

The injured boy stirred uneasily, and Mr. Henry hastened to him. "Do you feel much pain?" he kindly asked.

"Rather sharpish for that," was the answer. "I say, sir, you—you don't think I shall die?" and the bright brown eyes looked wistfully up at the master's, as the sudden anxious question was whispered. "It's my mother I am thinking of," added Talbot, by way of excuse.

"So far as I believe, there's no danger," replied Mr. Henry, bending down to him and pushing the hair off his hot brow. "Only put yourself trustingly into God's care, my boy—have you learnt to do it?—and rely upon it, all shall be for the best."

Miss Brabazon and a nurse came into the room and the gentlemen prepared to leave it. Mr. Henry went first. Talbot put out his hand and detained Mr. Jebb.

"I say, sir, who *is* that?"

"The new foreign master. Do you keep yourself tranquil, Talbot."

With the morning came the discipline of school rules. Talbot was going on quite favourably, and all outward excitement had subsided. The breakfast hour was half-past seven; from eight to a quarter-past the pupils from the masters' houses arrived, also those who lived altogether out of bounds, with their friends or in lodgings; slightingly called by the college, these latter, "outsiders." During this quarter of an hour the roll was called, and the boys did what they pleased: it was recreation with them. At a quarter-past eight the chapel bell called all to service.

The boys stood in groups this morning in the quadrangle, not availing themselves of their liberty to be noisy during this quarter of an hour, but discussing in an undertone the startling events of the previous night. Dick Loftus had openly avowed the whole; and somebody, not Dick, had contrived to betray Mr. Smart's share in it. Dick pro-

tested that whoever had peered at them was a master: he judged by the cap. It appeared equally certain that it could not have been a master: the only masters arrived were Mr. Jebb and Mr. Long, and they, at this very self-same hour, had been with Dr. Brabazon in his private study. But it was easy for any one of the senior boys to have taken up a master's trencher by mistake, or to have gone out in it wilfully to mislead. Had the boy, whoever it was, purposely shot Talbot? The opinion, rejected at first, was gaining ground now; led to, possibly, by the appropriation of the master's cap. Altogether it was a very unpleasant affair, enshrouded in some mystery.

William Gall was there this morning, the senior of the school; a slight, short young man, the age of Loftus major, with an undoubted ugly face, but an honest one, and dark hair. There was not much good feeling existing between Gall and Loftus, as was well known, but it had never broken into an open explosion. Gall despised Loftus for his

pride and his fopperies, his assumption of superiority and condescension; and Loftus looked down on Gall and his family as vulgar city people. The Galls lived at Orville Green, but the son was an in-door scholar. Mr. Gall was in some mysterious trade that had to do with tallow. There was plenty of money; but Loftus thought, on the whole, that it was out of the order of right things for the son of a tallow-man to be head of the college and senior over *him*.

Three or four new scholars came straggling in during this quarter of an hour, and they attracted the usual amount of attention and quizzing. One of them was a tall, agile, upright boy of sixteen, or rather more, with a handsome, open countenance, dark chestnut hair, and bright grey eyes. He stood looking about, as if uncertain where to go. Mr. Long went up to him.

"Are you belonging to the college?—a new student?"

"Yes."

"If you pass through that side of the

cloisters and turn to the left, you will find the call-room. Mr. Baker is there with the roll, inscribing the new names as they come in, and he will add yours. What is your name?"

"Paradyne."

There was a free, frank sound in the voice, though the words spoken had been but two; and the boy lifted his hat (he would not get his cap and gown for a day or two) with somewhat of foreign courtesy as he turned away to the cloister. Mr. Henry, who had heard the name, hastened after him and overtook him in the cloister passage.

"You are George Paradyne?"

"Yes. And you are ——"

"Mr. Henry."

Their hands were locked together; they gazed into each other's face. "I don't think I should have known you," said the boy.

"No? I should have known you anywhere. It is the same face, not changed; but you have grown from a little boy into a great one."

"*Your* face is changed. It is thinner and paler, and—somehow ——"

"Well?" said Mr. Henry, for the sentence had come to a stop midway. "Speak out."

"It is a sadder sort of face than it used to be. Are you quite well?"

"Yes, I am well. I don't know that I am strong. Good-bye for now," hastily added Mr. Henry. "Mr. Long has told you where to go."

The boy continued his way up the cloister, and another ran up to Mr. Henry—a second-desk boy named Powell.

"I say, sir, do you know that new fellow?"

"I used to know him," replied Mr. Henry. "But I have not seen him for several years."

"Lamb says he thinks he is an outsider. I like the look of him. Where did you know him, Mr. Henry?"

"At the Heidelberg University. He was a young pupil there, when I was a junior master."

Mr. Powell's face grew considerably

longer. "At the Heidelberg University! Does he speak German?"

"He used to speak it perfectly. I dare say he does still."

"That's blue, though," was the rejoinder. "I'm going in for the German prize: but who can stand against a fellow who has been in Germany? He's sure to be at our desk. What's his name, sir?"

"You will learn it in good time, no doubt," called back Mr. Henry, who was hastening away as if he were in a hurry. And Mr. Powell vaulted over the open cloister wall into the quadrangle: which was against rules.

A few moments, and the chapel-bell rang out. The boys got their caps and gowns, and went into the call-room. Dr. Brabazon came up in his surplice and hood, and they followed him into chapel.

Possibly it was because Mr. Trace had no duty to perform—for Gall and Loftus read the lessons—that his sight recreated itself with scanning the new scholars. Not so

much the whole of them, and there were nine or ten, as one—George Paradyne. It was not a stare; Trace never stared; his eyes were drawn together so closely that even Paradyne himself could not have known he was being looked at; but nevertheless, so intent was Trace's gaze, so absorbed was he in the new face, that at the end of the *Te Deum* he quite forgot to sit down, and remained standing, to the amusement of his friends.

"I wonder if it *is*," spoke Trace to himself, as they left the chapel. And he inquired of two or three what that new fellow's name was, but could not learn it.

"He's some crony of the new master's," spoke Powell; "I saw them shaking hands like mad. It'll be an awful shame for him to be put in our class, if he *is* up in German."

Trace had not waited to hear the conclusion; the boys were hastening to take their places in school. On this morning, until their state of advancement could be ascertained, the fresh boys were ordered to a

bench opposite the first desk. Trace, who sat next to Loftus, directed his attention to this new boy.

"Do you recognise him, Bertie?" he asked in a whisper.

"Recognise him? no," drawled Mr. Loftus, as if it were entirely beneath him to recognise any new fellow. And he could think of nothing but his pistols. Which Dr. Brabazon had taken possession of.

"Look at his face well," continued Trace. "Can you see no likeness to one you once knew?"

"Not I." And this time Mr. Loftus did not speak until he had taken a good look at the boy. "Don't know the face from Adam."

"Well, perhaps I am mistaken," mused Trace. "It's a long while since I saw the other."

But, nevertheless, in spite of this conclusion, Trace could not keep his eyes off the face, and his studies suffered. The boy went up to Dr. Brabazon for examination, as it was usual for a new scholar to do; and Trace's

ears were bent to catch the sound of the voice, if haply it might bear recognition for his memory. The head master found the boy thoroughly well advanced in his studies, and a suspicion arose in the school that he would be placed at the first desk. Loftus heard somebody say it, and elevated his eyebrows in displeasure. When the school rose, Trace went up to Mr. Baker.

"I beg your pardon, sir; would you allow me to look for one minute at the roll?"

"At the roll?—what for?" returned Mr. Baker, who was a little man with a bald head.

"I think I know one of the new boys, sir. I want to see his name."

There was no rule against showing the roll, and Mr. Baker took it out of his desk. Trace ran his finger down the new names—which were entered at the end until their places should be allotted—and it halted at one.

"*George Paradyne!*" he mentally read. "Thank you, sir," he said aloud, with the

quiet civility characteristic of him: and Mr. Baker locked up the roll again.

For once in his college life, a burning spot of emotion might have been seen on Raymond Trace's cheek. A foul injury, as he regarded it, had been done to his family and fortune by the father of George Paradyne; and he deemed that the son had no more right to be receiving his education with honest men's sons, as their equal and associate, than darkness has to be made hail-fellow-well-met with light. He went in search of Loftus. Loftus was leaning over the open wall, his legs in the cloisters, his head in the quadrangle, and his arm round a huge pillar, ruminating bitterly on the wrongs dealt out to himself, on Dick's wickedness, and the ignominy of possessing pistols that one can't get at.

"I thought I was not mistaken in the fellow," began Trace. "It is George Paradyne."

"Who?" cried Loftus, starting round, aroused by the name.

"George Paradyne: Paradyne's son."

"No! Do you mean that fellow you asked about? It can't be."

"It *is*. I knew him, I tell you; and I've been looking at the name on the roll. Your memory must be a bad one, Loftus, not to have recognised the face also."

Loftus drew a deep breath, as if unable to take in the full sense of the words. But he never *displayed* much surprise at anything.

"I don't suppose I saw the fellow three times in my life," he presently said. "We did not live on the spot, as you did; and it is so long ago."

"What's to be done? He can't be allowed to stay here."

Loftus shrugged his shoulders, French fashion, having no answer at hand. "Brabazon is not aware of who he is, I suppose?"

"Impossible; or he'd never have admitted him. One can overlook some things in a fellow's antecedents; but *forgery*—that's rather too strong. If the rest of the college chose to tolerate him, you and I and Dick could not."

Mr. Loftus threw up his condemning nose at the latter addition. Dick, indeed! Dick seemed to be going in for something too bad on his own score, to be fastidious as to the society he kept.

"What's the matter?" inquired one of the first-class boys, Irby, coming up to them from the middle of the quadrangle, and leaning his arms on the cloister wall, to talk face to face.

"That new fellow, Paradyne—do you know which of them he is?" broke off Trace.

Irby nodded. "A good-looking chap, don't you mean? Well up in his classics."

"Well up in them by the help of stolen money, I suppose," spoke Trace, an angry light for a moment gleaming in his eye. "You have heard, Irby, of that dreadful business of ours at Liverpool, some four years ago, when Loftus & Trace, the best and richest and most respected firm in the town, were ruined through a man they had taken in as partner?"

"I've heard something of it," said Irby, wondering.

"This new fellow, Paradyne, is the man's son."

Irby gave a low whistle. "Let's hear the particulars, Trace."

And Trace proceeded to give them. Irby was a great friend of his, and there were no other ears in view. Loftus drew himself up against the pillar, and stood there with his arms folded, listening in silence; all of them unconscious that Mr. Henry was on the other side of the pillar, taking a sketch of the quadrangle and the door of the chapel.

You heard something of the tale, reader, from Mr. Jebb last night, and there's not much more to be told. Trace, speaking quietly, as he always did, enlarged upon the wrongs dealt out to his father and Mr. Loftus, by the man Paradyne. It was the most miserable business that ever came out to the world, he said, blighting all their prospects for life; never a rogue, so great, went unhung.

"And he had only been with them a couple of years," he wound up with; "only a couple of years! The marvel was, that he could have done so much mischief in so short a time——"

"The marvel was, that he could have done it at all without being detected," interposed Loftus, speaking for the first time.

"Yes," corrected Trace; "people could not understand how he contrived to hoodwink my father. But that came of overconfidence: he had such blind trust in Paradyne."

"Why did they take him in partner at all?" asked Irby.

"Ah, why indeed!" responded Trace, pushing his trencher up with a petulant jerk, as if the past transaction were a present and personal wrong. "But the business had grown too large for one head, and Mr. Loftus was almost a sleeping partner. Who was to suppose it would turn out so? If we could only foresee the end of things at the beginning!"

"Let it drop, Trace," said Loftus. "It's not so pleasant a thing to recall."

"The fellow called himself Captain Paradyne; he came introduced to them grandly," resumed Trace, in utter disregard of the interruption. "Of course he dropped the 'Captain' when he joined them."

"Was the man hung?" questioned Irby.

"Neither hung nor transported; he saved himself. On the evening of his first examination before the magistrates," continued Trace, "after he was put back in the cell, he took poison."

Irby's eyes grew round with awe. "What a wicked simpleton he must have been to do that! Poor fellow, though," he added, a feeling of compassion stealing over him, "I dare say he——"

"When you undertake to relate a history, gentlemen, you should confine yourselves to the truth. Mr. Paradyne did not take poison. He died of heart disease, brought on by excitement."

The interruption was Mr. Henry's. He

quietly put his head round the pillar, and then came into full view, with his sketch-book and pencil.

"How do you know anything about it?" demanded Trace, recovering from his surprise.

"I do happen to know about it," was the calm answer. "The case was bad enough, as Heaven knew; but you need not make it worse."

"It was reported that he took poison," coldly persisted Trace.

"Only at the first moment. When he was found dead, people naturally leaped to that conclusion, and the newspapers published it as a fact. But on the inquest it was proved by the medical men that he had died from natural causes. I think," added Mr. Henry, in a dreamy kind of tone, "that that report arose in mercy."

The three boys stared at him questioningly.

"To his friends the business of itself was cruel enough—the discovery that he, whom they had so respected as the soul of honour, was unworthy," pursued the master. "Then

followed the worse report of his self-destruction, and in that shock of horror the other was lost—was as nothing. But when the truth came to light on the following day—that he had not laid guilty hands on himself, but that God had taken him,—why, the revulsion of feeling, the thankfulness, was so great as to seem like a very boon from Heaven. It enabled them to bear the disgrace as a lesser evil: the blow had lost its sting."

"Did you know him?" questioned Trace.

"I knew him in Germany. And these particulars, when they occurred, were written over to me."

"Perhaps you respected him in Germany?" cynically added Trace, who could not speak or think of the unfortunate Captain Paradyne with his usual degree of equable temper.

"I never respected any one so much," avowed Mr. Henry, a scarlet spot of hectic arising in his pale cheeks.

Trace made no rejoinder. To contend was not his habit. It was impossible he could

think worse of any one than of the unhappy man in question, and nothing had ever convinced Trace fully that the death was a natural one.

"He has been dead four years," gently suggested Mr. Henry, as if bespeaking their mercy for his memory. "As to his son, it must be a question for Dr. Brabazon of course whether or not he remains here; but I would ask you what he, the boy, has done, that you should visit the past upon him? Can you not imagine that the calamity itself is a sufficient blight on his life? Be generous, and do not proclaim him to the school."

"It would be more generous not to do it," candidly avowed Irby, who had a good-natured, ready tongue. "Of course it was not the boy's fault; we shall lose nothing by it."

"Lose!" repeated Mr. Henry. "If you only knew the gain! There's not a kind action that we ever do, but insures its own reward; there's not a word of ill-nature, a secret deed of malice, but comes home to us

four-fold, sooner or later. Look out carefully as you go through life, and see whether I do not tell you truth."

"Young Paradyne is free for me," said Loftus, speaking up frankly. And Irby nodded his head in acquiescence.

"Thank you greatly; I shall take it as a kindness shown myself," said Mr. Henry. He turned and looked at Trace.

"Of course, if Mr. Henry wishes the thing to be hushed up, and Dr. Brabazon to be left in ignorance——"

"Stay," said the master, interrupting Trace's words. "You heard me say a moment ago that it must be a question for Dr. Brabazon whether or not Paradyne remains here. But I think that Dr. Brabazon would, in either event, counsel you not to denounce the boy publicly."

"I am not given to denounce my companions publicly; or privately either: as you perhaps will find when you are used to us," was Trace's rejoinder, delivered with civility. "If the doctor condones the past, why, let it

be condoned; I can't say more. But the sooner the question is decided, the better."

"Undoubtedly."

Mr. Henry turned round with the last word, and applied himself to his drawing. Loftus and Irby strolled away, and Trace besought an interview with Dr. Brabazon. It was at once accorded; and he told him who Paradyne was. To do Trace justice, he spoke without prejudice; not alluding minutely to past facts, but simply saying that the new scholar, George Paradyne, was the son of the man who had committed all sorts of ill, and ruined his father and Mr. Loftus.

"And you and Loftus think you can't study with him!" observed the doctor, when he had listened, and asked a few questions.

"I did not say that, sir: it is for you to decide. We shall get over the unpleasantness by degrees, no doubt, if he does stay on."

"Very well, Trace; I'll consider of it. Keep a strictly silent tongue about it in the college."

The interview did not last many minutes. Soon after its termination, an authoritative cry was heard down the cloisters for Loftus major.

"Here," shouted Loftus from the other end of the quadrangle.

"You are to go in to the Head Master."

Away went Loftus in his indolent fashion; he rarely hurried himself for anything. Dr. Brabazon met him at his study door: he put into his hands a parcel tied with string, and sealed at the ends with the doctor's seal.

"Your pistols, Loftus. I shall have something to say to you later, in regard to them and the calamity you have most unjustifiably been the means of causing. Take them back at once; and make my compliments to Sir Simon, and say I particularly wish to see him. Perhaps he will oblige me by coming over: to-day, if possible. You'll be back to dinner, if you put your best foot foremost."

Mr. Loftus flung on his gown and cap, and went away with the parcel in an access of private rage. It was so mortifying! it was

the very acme of humiliation!—a dog with a burnt tail could feel jolly, in comparison. Some of the middle-school boys, leaping over the road from the plantation, came right upon him. That incorrigible Dick was one of them, and he recognized the parcel.

"It's the pistols," proclaimed Dick. "Brabazon has turned them out. I say, Bertie, though, that's not so bad; we had bets that he'd confiscate them."

"A pity but he could confiscate you," was the scornful retort thrown back.

Dick laughed. The throng echoed it. But Mr. Loftus went on his way, and made no further sign, his fine figure drawn to its full height, and his nose held in the air.

CHAPTER III.

HARD AND OBSTINATE AS NAILS.

DR. BRABAZON sat at his desk-table, birch in hand. Not often were the whole of the boys assembled in hall as on this afternoon; there were smaller rooms appropriated to particular branches of study. A huge birch, apparently made out of ten besoms. The stump rested on the table, the pointed end with its tickling twigs, tapered aloft in the air. This formidable weapon, meant to inspire wholesome awe, had never been used within memory. Very rarely was it taken from its receptacle to be held *in terrorem*, as now, over the different desks, run-

ning down the side walls of the long room, and along the end of it.

The shooting of James Talbot the previous night in the plantation: was it an accident, or was it done of deliberation? This was what the Head Master wanted to get at: and he very particularly wanted to get at the gentleman who did it. Dick Loftus had made a clean breast of it, offhand; for it was in Dick's nature so to do. But, in spite of all the questioning; private, individual, and collective;—in spite of putting the school upon its honour;—in spite of the offered promise that the boy, if an accident, should be held harmless, nobody came forward to confess; the whole lot remained, as the Doctor in his vexation expressed it, "hard and obstinate as nails." So then the birch was got out.

"Gentlemen, I feel sure it was a pure accident, and I could extend my free forgiveness to the offender if he will only come forward in honour and avow himself. Talbot is going on well; will be amidst us again, I

hope, in a few days; there's no earthly reason for his refusing to acknowledge himself. Mrs. Talbot, sitting now with her son, says she forgives him heartily. She is a Christian woman, gentlemen, and she is sorry for the boy, instead of angry with him, because she knows how sorry he must be himself for this. 'Accidents and moments of thoughtlessness happen to us all,' she has just remarked to me: and so they do. Come! I hope there's some honour left amidst us yet."

The appeal elicited no response. And yet, that one of the boys present had been guilty, there could be little doubt; or that he had gone out in a master's cap by accident or design. In the confusion of the news the previous night, when a rush was made to the robing closet, the caps of the two masters, then arrived, were found hanging there. Upon the boys being mustered, all who were known to have returned to school answered to their names. There was no confusion, no sign of guilt observable in any one of the responders: nevertheless, the offender must

have made a run, as if for his life, sneaked in, replaced the cap, and mingled with the others.

"*Won't* you speak?" reiterated the Doctor, casting his eyes around in anger.

But not one answered.

Up went the birch, and came down again on its hard end. Dr. Brabazon was by no means a choleric man; but he could be so when greatly provoked.

"Mr. Henry—no, don't rise, don't quit your place—of what height was the boy you saw running away?"

The Doctor's voice—a sonorous voice at all times—went rolling down the spacious room to the opposite corner, where Mr. Henry sat behind his desk. The latter hesitated in his reply, and the boys turned their eyes from the Head Master to him.

"I cannot say positively, sir," was the foreign master's answer. "It was so momentary a glimpse that I caught."

"Yet you met him—as I am given to understand—face to face!"

"I did; but he glided aside at once amidst the trees. He was of a good height."

"Tall enough for a senior boy?"

"Yes, certainly: I think so."

The birch agitated itself gently, as if the Doctor's hand shook a little, and he looked full at the first desk, regarding those seated at it in individual turn.

"I thought I could have *trusted* you all; I deemed there was not one of you that I might not have relied upon. Gall, did you do this? I ask you chiefly for form's sake, for you had not come back to college. Did you fire, by accident or design, this pistol off in the plantation last night?"

"No, sir, I did not," replied Gall, slightly rising in his place to answer.

"Did you, Loftus major?"

The exceeding satire of the question, as addressed to him, the wronged owner of the abstracted weapon, nearly struck Loftus major dumb.

"Of course I did not, sir," he said, after a pause.

"Did you go out of college after prayers?"

"No."

"Trace, did you go out of college after prayers, and fire off this pistol?"

"No, sir." And Trace's usual civility of tone was marked by a dash of remonstrance at being asked. Suspect him, Mr. Trace, the model fellow of the school! What next?

"Irby, did you?"

"I, sir! No, sir. It wasn't me, sir."

"Fullarton, did you?"

"I did not get back until this morning, sir."

"True. Brown major, did you do it?"

Brown Major, a simple fellow in most things, but with a rare capacity for Latin and Greek, opened his eyes in pure wonder. "Please, sir, I never fired off a pistol in my life, sir. I shouldn't know how to do it, sir."

And so on. Not a boy at the first desk acknowledged it; and they numbered twelve. The Doctor glanced at the second desk; some tall boys were there; but he said no

more. Perhaps he thought suspicion did not lie with them; perhaps he would not afford them opportunity of telling a falsehood.

"It seems, then, I am not to be told. Well,"—and he turned particularly to the seniors—"I must believe that some mystery attaches to this affair, and that not one of you is guilty. I will trust you still, as I have ever done: only—do not let it come to my knowledge later that my trust is a mistaken one."

He flung up the lower compartment of his table, put in the birch, and shut it down with a bang. An uncomfortable feeling was on the Head Master that day.

A thirteenth boy had been added to the first desk, in George Paradyne. Mr. Baker had directed him to take his place at it after morning school, in accordance with some words let fall by the Head Master, of the boy's proficiency. The first desk was a very exclusive desk, not to be invaded lightly by a new-comer, and the decision, an unusual one, did not find favour. Paradyne was greeted

with a stare of surprise, and the desk turned its back upon him.

The afternoon studies proceeded as on other afternoons; but neither masters nor boys felt at ease. Trace, especially, was in a state of inward commotion, calm as he appeared outwardly. He supposed that Dr. Brabazon had decided to retain Paradyne in the college, and he resented it utterly. Mr. Trace had also one or two private matters of his own troubling him, that it would not be convenient to speak of.

Loftus, as you perceive, was back in his place. He had walked on to his uncle's before dinner, when despatched by the Head Master, carrying the banished pistols in all the ignominy of the position. Sir Simon Orville's residence was about half a mile from the college. Pond Place it was called; an appellation that was supposed to have originated from a large pond in the vicinity, and was excessively distastful to Mr. Loftus. A lovely spot, whatever it might be called, with the brightest and rarest flowers cluster-

ing on the green slope before the low white house. Sir Simon happened to be tending some of these flowers, as it was his delight to do, when Loftus entered, and that young gentleman was a little disconcerted at the encounter. In his present frame of mind, he really did not want the additional humiliation of having to explain to his uncle.

"Halloa!" cried Sir Simon, in surprise. "What brings you here?"

He was a little round man, with a red, kind face, shaped not unlike the head of a codfish, and light hair that stuck up in a high point above his forehead: one of the most unpretending, outspeaking men ever known, who could not conceal that he had been "born nobody," imperfectly educated, and had made his fortune laboriously and honestly by the work of his hands. Now and then he burst out with these revelations before the schoolboys, to whom he was fond of declaring his sentiments, to the intense chagrin of Loftus major and the dancing delight of Dick. Sir Simon, an old bachelor,

was very kind and good, hospitable to everybody, and making much of his nephews. He was fond of Albert Loftus, distinguishing the really good qualities of the boy's nature, though ridiculing his pride and self-assumption. "He'll get it taken out of him," Sir Simon would say: and to do the knight justice, he spared no opportunity of helping on the process of extermination.

Twitching at his grey garden coat, which caught, with the suddenness of his turning, in a beautiful shrub that bore white flowers, Sir Simon looked in his nephew's face: not quite so lofty a face as usual.

"What's the matter, Bertie? What's in that parcel?"

So Bertie Loftus had to explain: he had taken a brace of pistols to school, and the Doctor had despatched them back again. Sir Simon enjoyed the information immensely; that is the "despatching back" portion of it. He knew very little about pistols himself; could not remember, like Brown major, to have handled one in his life; and regarded

them rather in the light of a dangerous animal that you were never sure of.

"I should have buried them in the ground, had I been the Doctor, instead of giving them back to you. You'll come to some mischief, Mr. Albert, if you meddle with edged tools."

"I'd as soon he had buried them, as sent me back with them in the face of the school," avowed Loftus, in his subdued spirit. Very subdued just now, for there was more behind. Too honourable not to tell the whole, he went on to disclose the calamity that the pistols had caused. Sir Simon was horrorstruck.

"*Albert!* You have shot a boy?"

"It was that miserable Dick," returned Loftus, looking as chapfallen as it was possible for him, with his naturally proud face, to look. "I'm very sorry, of course; I'd rather have been shot myself. But it was not my fault, and Dick ought to be punished."

"No; you ought to be punished for taking the things to school," rebuked Sir Simon.

"It would be punishment enough for my whole life, sir, if I had been the means of putting a fellow-creature's life in danger. Here, stop! Where are you going now?"

"To put the pistols away," answered Loftus, who was turning to the house.

"Are they loaded?"

"No, sir; not now."

"I'd not permit a loaded pistol to come inside my house, look you, Albert. You'll shoot yourself, sir; that's what you'll do. And it's that poor Talbot, is it? I knew his father when I lived in Bermondsey."

Away went Loftus, feeling no security that the pistols were not going to be confiscated here. He locked them up in the room he occupied when staying at his uncle's, and came forth again directly, delivering the Head Master's message as he passed Sir Simon.

"Very well; I'll come, tell Dr. Brabazon. I suppose he is going to complain of this underhanded act of yours."

Mr. Loftus supposed so too: had supposed

nothing else since the message was given him.

"Here; stop a bit; don't stride off like that. I suppose you must *eat*, though you have done your best to kill a boy. Will you have some dinner? There's a beautiful couple of ducks."

"I can't stay, Uncle Simon: the Head Master ordered me back at once. Thank you all the same."

Sir Simon nodded, and Bertie set off back again; leaving Pond Place behind him, and the cherished pistols that had come altogether to grief.

Sir Simon Orville knew the hours at the college, and he timed his visit so as to catch Dr. Brabazon at the rising of afternoon school. The Doctor took him into his study: a pleasant room, with a large bay window at the back of the house, partially overlooking the boys' playground, with its gymnastic poles. The middle compartment of the window opened to the ground, French fashion.

Sir Simon spoke at once of the unhappy

accident that his nephews had been the means of causing; asking what he could do, how he could help the poor boy, and insisting that all charges should be made his. He then found it was not on that business Dr. Brabazon had sent for him, but on the other annoying matter relating to George Paradyne. The doctor stated the circumstances to him: that one of the new scholars, entered that day, had been recognized by Trace to be the son of the defaulting man, Paradyne.

"It vexed me greatly," observed the master, when he had concluded his recital. "Somehow the term seems to have begun ungraciously. I suppose there's no doubt that the boy is the same?"

"I daresay not," replied Sir Simon, standing up by the window. "Raymond ought to know him."

"Ay. Well, it is a very vexatious matter, and one difficult to deal with. Just at first, while Trace was speaking, I thought there could be only one course—that of putting Paradyne away. But the cruel injustice of

this on the boy struck me immediately, and I could not help asking myself why we should visit on children the sins of their fathers, any more than—than——" Dr. Brabazon seemed to hesitate strangely, and came to a long pause — "any more than we visit the sins of children on their parents."

Sir Simon brought down his stick with a couple of thumps. It was a thick stick of carved walnut-wood, that he was rarely seen without, and he had a habit of enforcing his arguments with it in this manner. Dr. Brabazon understood this as meant to enforce his.

"And so I decided to do nothing until I had seen you. I would not have assigned him his place in the school, but Mr. Baker did so before I could stop it. But for your nephews being here, I should not think of taking notice of the matter; I should let the boy remain on. As it is, I must leave it to you, Sir Simon. If you consider he ought not to be in the same establishment as your nephews—their companion and associate—

I'll put him away. Or, if you think it would be very objectionable to themselves——"

"Objectionable to them!" cried Sir Simon, bringing down his stick again in wrath. "I can only tell you this, doctor, that if my nephews were mean enough and illnatured enough to carry out those old scores upon the boy, I'd disown 'em."

"Trace, I am sure, will not like the boy to stay, though he may silently put up with it. I saw that."

"Trace has got his silent crotchets just as much as anybody else," cried Sir Simon, a shade of deeper anger in his tone. "I'll talk to him; I'll talk to the three. Treat Paradyne as you do the rest, Dr. Brabazon; I would ask it of you as a personal favour. *I* turn the boy away! I've just as much right to do it as he has to turn me out of Pond Place. Deprive the lad of an education; of the means by which he'll have to make his bread? No; a hundred times over, no," concluded Sir Simon, in an explosive tone, the stick descending again.

"Very well; he shall stay. And if circumstances force me to put him away later, —that is, if the facts become known to the school, and the boy's life is thereby rendered unhappy, why—but time enough to talk of that," broke off the speaker. "It might happen, however, Sir Simon; and there's no knowing how soon."

Sir Simon saw that it might. "Who knows of it?" he asked.

"Your two nephews and John Irby. I have strictly charged them, on their honour, not to speak of this: I called them in before afternoon school. Dick does not appear to have heard the name yet; but I shall speak to him. It is unfortunate the name should be so peculiar—Paradyne."

Sir Simon nodded. "What an odd thing it is the boy should have come to this particular school," he exclaimed. "Is he one of your boarders?"

"No; he is an out-pupil; not in any master's house at all. About five weeks ago," pursued the head master, in explana-

tion, "I received a letter from the country, from a lady signing herself Paradyne—I remember thinking it an uncommon name at the time—asking if there was a vacancy in the college for a well-advanced out door pupil, and inquiring the terms. There happened to be a vacancy, and I said so, and sent the terms; in a few days she wrote again, saying her son would enter. She has come up to live here. I asked Paradyne this morning where he was going to live, and he said, close by, with his mother."

"They never much liked her, I remember," observed Sir Simon, who was casting his thoughts back. "Mrs. Trace used to say she spent too much."

"I suppose they lived beyond their means, these Paradynes."

"No; it did not appear so; and the mystery never was cleared up where the abstracted sums (enormous sums they were!) had gone, or what they had gone in. Mrs. Trace, my poor sister Mary, was of so very quiet a disposition herself, caring

nothing for dress or show; and Mrs. Paradyne, I suppose, did care for it. I remember my brother-in-law, Robert Trace, observed to me after the explosion, how glad he was that he and his wife had lived quietly; that no blame on that score could attach to him. The Loftus's were different; they spent all before them; not, however, more than they had a right to spend. I suppose you know the particulars, doctor?"

"Not at all. I never heard them."

"Then I'll tell you the story, from beginning to end, in a few brief words. My brother-in-law, Robert Trace, who was always up to his eyes in business—for Loftus would not attend to it—had some matters to transact for a Captain Arthur Paradyne,—the selling out of shares, or the buying in of shares, I forget which; and an intimacy grew up between him and his client. Paradyne had come into some money through the death of an aunt in Liverpool; previous to that he had lived in Germany, on a very small income, as I

understood. He seemed a thorough gentleman, and, I should have said, an honest, open-dealing man. In an unlucky hour Robert Trace—who had been hankering after a third partner for some time, though Loftus could not see what they wanted with one, as they kept efficient clerks—proposed to Captain Paradyne to invest his money—two or three thousand pounds I think it was—in their concern, and take a share. Paradyne consented. Mr. Loftus murmured at first, but at last he consented; and the firm became Loftus, Trace, & Paradyne. Things went on smoothly for two years, or thereabouts, though Paradyne proved an utter novice in business matters, as your military men, gentlemen by birth and habit, often do; and Trace grumbled awfully. Not publicly, you know; only in private to me, whenever I was down at Liverpool. Then came the crash. Paradyne was discovered to have played up Old Harry with everything; the money of the firm, the shares of customers, all he could lay his hands on.

Strange to say, it was Loftus, the unbusiness man, who was the one to make the first discovery. Only think of that!"

Dr. Brabazon merely nodded. He was listening attentively.

"Mr. Loftus had gone to Liverpool for a few days. Something struck him in looking over the books, and he called Robert Trace's attention to it. That night in private they went into the thing together, and saw that some roguery was being played. The next day it was all out, and ruin stared them in the face. On the following morning Mr. Loftus caused Paradyne to be arrested, and telegraphed for me. When I got down at night, the man was dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Dr. Brabazon.

"He was dead, that poor Arthur Paradyne. Ah! when Loftus met me with the news, it was a shock. He had been taken before the magistrates for examination, was remanded, and put in a cell in the lock-up, or whatever they call the place. One of the clerks, a young man named Hopper, was allowed to

have an interview with him; half an hour afterwards Paradyne was found dead in his cell. Of course it was assumed that he had taken poison, and the report found its way to the newspapers. But when the doctors made the examination, they found he had died of disease of the heart;—a natural sequence to the events of the day, for one whose heart was not sound."

"It was very shocking altogether."

"Ay, it was. And with his death ended the investigation. 'Why pursue it?' Trace asked; 'let it drop, for the wife and children's sake.' Robert Trace was a hard man in general; but I must say he behaved leniently in this case. It did not, so far, touch his pocket, you see; for all the investigation in the world would not have brought back the wasted money, or undone the work. The concern was wound up; Mr. Loftus had to move into a small house, and otherwise reduce his expenses; Robert Trace went to America with a little money I lent him; and Mrs. Paradyne disappeared."

"It was a dreadful thing for *her*," spoke Dr. Brabazon.

"Very. People, in their indignation against Paradyne, could not think of her; but I did, and I went to see her. She was very bitter against her husband; I could see it, though she said little."

"Did she tell you how the money had gone?"

"She did not know. The discovery that he had been using it came upon her with the same shock of astonishment that it had upon the rest of us. One thing she could swear to, she said to me—that it had never been brought home, or used in any way for her or his children. I can't quite recollect about the children," broke off Sir Simon: "there was one, I know, for I saw him—a fine boy; I suppose the one now come here; but I have an impression there were more."

"Had she nothing left—the mother?"

"I asked her the question. She told me she had a small income, nothing like enough to keep her. I wonder how they have

lived?" continued Sir Simon, after a pause.

"The son has been to a thorough good school," observed Dr. Brabazon. "Did Mr. Paradyne acknowledge his guilt?"

"He denied it utterly, so Loftus told me; made believe at first to think they were accusing him in joke."

A sudden light, something like hope, appeared in Dr. Brabazon's eyes as he raised them to Sir Simon.

"Is it possible that he could have been innocent?" he eagerly asked.

"No, it is not possible; there was no one else who could have had access to the shares and things," was the avowal. But Sir Simon looked grieved, and was grieved, to have to make it.

And so it was decided that George Paradyne should remain.

CHAPTER IV.

SIR SIMON ORVILLE'S OFFERED REWARD.

IN the comfortable apartment which was made the family sitting-room, where Miss Brabazon might usually be found by anybody who wanted her, sat a young lady on this same afternoon. A laughing, saucy, wilful girl of thirteen, with short petticoats, and wavy brown hair hanging down. It was Miss Rose Brabazon. Dr. Brabazon had married two wives and lost them both: he had several older children, all out in the world now, but this was the only young one, and spoilt accordingly. That is, all out in the world save his eldest daughter, whom you will see presently. Miss Rose was supposed

to be at her studies. Sundry exercise-books were before her on the square table, covered with its handsome green cloth, in the middle of the room; in point of fact, she was inditing a private letter, and taking recreative trips to the window between whiles,—a large, pleasant window, looking out on the gymnasium-ground, with a view of the Hampstead and Highgate hills in the far distance. At least seventeen of the boys were madly in love with Miss Rose, and Miss Rose reciprocated the compliment to a large proportion of them.

The door opened, and Miss Brabazon came in: a middle-sized, capable, practical young woman of thirty, with a kind, good, sensible face. She was the prop and stay of the house; looking after everything; to the well-being of the large household, to the comfort of her father and of the boys, and to the education of Rose. Her dark hair was plainly braided on her face, and she wore a dress of some soft blue material, with lace collar and cuffs. Crossing over to a side table, she laid

down a book she was carrying, and then looked at the address of two letters in her hand, which had just been given her by the postman as she crossed the hall. Miss Rose, all signs of everything unorthodox hidden away, was diligently bending over her studies.

"Is that exercise not done yet, Rose?"

"It is so very difficult, Emma."

"You have been idling away your time again, I fear. Have you practised?" continued Miss Brabazon, glancing half round at the piano.

"Not yet, Emma."

"Have you learnt your French?"

"I've not looked at it."

"What *have* you been doing?"

"Miss Rose Brabazon lifted her pretty face, and shook back her wavy hair from her laughing blue eyes.

"I thought you'd perhaps give me holiday this afternoon, as you were so much occupied up-stairs with Lord Shrewsbury and his mother."

"Now, Rose, you knew better. And be

so kind as to call the boys by their right names. I wish you'd be a steady child!"

Rose laughed. "Sir Simon Orville's here, Emma. I saw him at the study window just now with papa."

"Of course! That's the way you get your lessons done, Rose."

Miss Rose tossed her pen-wiper into the air and caught it again. She had the peculiar faculty of never listening to reproofs. At least, of listening to profit.

"Whom are those letters for, Emma."

"Not for you," answered Emma. "You may put the books away now, and go and wash your hands. It is tea-time."

Books, exercises, pens, ink, were all hurried into a drawer in the side-table, and away went Rose, meeting Mr. Henry at the door, for whom Miss Brabazon had sent. He no longer wore his grey travelling clothes, but was in a black surtout coat, looking, Miss Brabazon thought, very entirely a gentleman, with his quiet manner and refined face.

"Is this for you?" she asked, holding out one of the letters, which bore a foreign post-mark. "It is addressed to Doctor Henry."

He took it from her with a smile. "Yes, thank you; it is for me. Is there anything to pay?"

"No. Are you really Dr. Henry?"

"Oh, Miss Brabazon, it is only my degree at the Heidelberg University. I drop it here. I see this is from one of the professors. He forgot, I suppose: I wrote down my name for them all, 'Mr.' Henry."

"But why should you drop it?"

"It is much better to do so. Fancy a young man like I am being called doctor here! The masters would look askance at me, and the boys make fun of me in private. Please don't mention it, Miss Brabazon."

"Certainly not, as you wish it. I do not quite see your argument, though. Here's papa."

Dr. Brabazon came in with a quiet step. He threw himself into a chair, as one in utter

weariness, speaking sadly. "Oh, these boys, these boys!"

"Is anything the matter, papa?"

"Not much, Emma; save that I feel out of sorts with all things. Don't go, Mr. Henry, I want to speak to you."

Mr. Henry had been leaving the room. He turned back, and the doctor sat forward on his chair.

"You are acquainted with young Paradyne, I hear, Mr. Henry."

A sort of bright hectic flashed into Mr. Henry's face. Miss Brabazon noticed it. When she knew him better, she found that any powerful emotion always brought it there. "Yes, sir, I knew him in Germany. He is a very clever boy."

"Ay, he seems that. I like the boy amazingly, so far as I have seen. What about his past history?"

Dr. Brabazon looked full at the German master. Mr. Henry understood the appeal, and found there was no help for it; he must respond. But he had an invincible

dislike to speak of the Paradynes and their misfortune. And the doctor was not alone.

"You allude to that unhappy business in Liverpool, sir?"

"I do. I am *very* sorry the boy has been recognised here. You may speak before my daughter, Mr. Henry,"—for the Doctor saw that he had glanced uneasily at Miss Brabazon. "I told her of it to-day; she is quite safe. It seems almost a fatality that the boy should have come to the very place where Trace and the Loftuses were being educated."

"Yes it does," was the sad response: and Dr. Brabazon little thought how bitterly that poor sensitive young German master was reproaching himself, for he had been the means of bringing young Paradyne to Orville College.

"I'd not hesitate to keep the boy a minute, if I were sure——"

"Oh, sir, don't turn him out!" interrupted Mr. Henry, his voice ringing with pain. "To dismiss George Paradyne from

the college, now that he has entered it, might prove a serious blight upon him; a blight that might follow him everywhere, for the cause could not fail to be noised abroad. Better let him stay and face it out: he may —it is possible he may—in time—live it down. I beg your pardon, Dr. Brabazon; I ought not to have said so much."

"My good friend,"—and the doctor was a little agitated also,—"you never need urge clemency on me. Heaven knows that we have, most of us, secret cares of our own; and they render us—or ought to—lenient upon others. If I could wipe out with a sponge the past as regards young Paradyne, I'd do it in glad thankfulness. He is to remain; it is so decided; and I hope the past will not ooze out to the school. That is what I fear."

"In himself he is, I think, everything that could be wished," said the usher in a low tone; "a good, honourable, painstaking boy, with the most implicit trust in his late father's innocence."

Dr. Brabazon lifted his eyes. "But there are no possible grounds to hope that he was innocent! Are there?"

"Not any, I fear."

"Well, well; better perhaps that the son should think it. You were not in Liverpool when it happened?"

"I was in Germany. The account of it was sent to me."

"By whom?—if I may ask it."

"By Mrs. Paradyne."

"*She* does not believe her husband to have been innocent?"

"Oh, no."

"Has Mrs. Paradyne enough to live upon?" pursued the doctor, whose interest in the affair had been growing.

"Her income is, I believe, very small indeed."

"Then how does she give the boy this expensive education?"

"I fancy some friend helps her," was the reply. "And I know that a considerable reduction was made in the terms of the last

school, on account of the boy's fluency in French and German."

"I suppose you have kept up a correspondence with them, Mr. Henry?"

"Yes; though not a very frequent one."

"When you knew Mr. Paradyne, was he an honest man?"

"Strictly so; honourable, upright, entitled to every respect. I have never been able to understand how he could fall from it."

"One of those sudden temptations, I suppose," observed the doctor, musingly. "Beginning in a trifle; ending—nobody knows where. I won't detain you longer, Mr. Henry."

Mr. Henry left the room with his letter. Miss Brabazon found her tongue, speaking impulsively.

"Papa, how strangely sensitive he seems to be, this new master of yours! Did you see the hectic on his face?"

"Poor fellow, yes. He is very friendless; and, to be so, gives us a fellow-feeling for the unfortunate, Emma."

"Are you aware that he is Dr. Henry?"

"Is he? He took honours abroad, I believe. We don't think much of that, you know."

"He drops the title over here; does not care that it should be known. Did it strike you, papa, while he was speaking, that he must have some secret trouble of his own?"

"No. I was thinking, Emma, of somebody else's secret trouble."

Miss Brabazon evidently understood the allusion. Her countenance fell, and she turned her face from the doctor's view.

"I thought Sir Simon was here, papa."

"So he is. Sir Simon's gone up to see Talbot. He will take tea with us, Emma."

The tea and Sir Simon came in together; Emma Brabazon was always glad to see him. Miss Rose followed, and the conversation was general, on account of the young lady's presence; otherwise it must have fallen on the Paradynes. Sir Simon was in spirits; Mrs. Talbot, sitting with her son, had assured him the doctor said all would be well.

But Sir Simon had something to do yet. When tea was over, he said farewell to his friends and went in search of the boys, who were in the cricket-field. He called aloud for Trace and for Loftus major. When the rest of the boys came flocking up with a shout—for it was a red-letter day when they could get Sir Simon—he sent them away again.

"I want only these two graceless ones," he said: "you all be off," and the boys went, shouting and laughing. "Yes, you, Irby; you may stop."

Gathering the three around him, he entered on his business, and talked to them for a few moments very plainly and earnestly. Loftus was the first to respond, and he did it with frankness.

"I have already said, sir, that Paradyne is safe for me. I will keep my word."

"I'll never tell upon him, Sir Simon," added Irby; "I'll make him my friend, if you like."

"Is the fellow to stop?" asked Trace.

"Yes, sir, he is to stop," replied Sir Simon,

turning sharply upon the speaker. "It is Dr. Brabazon's pleasure that he should stop, and it is mine also. What have you to say against it?"

"Nothing at all," quietly replied Trace.

"That's well," returned Sir Simon, in a cynical tone of suavity. "And now, mind you, Trace—all of you mind—if unpleasantness does arise to this unlucky boy through either of you, I'll—I'll—by George! I'll make him, young Paradyne, my heir."

He turned off in the direction of the plantation, curious to examine the scene of the last night's outrage. Quite one half of the college had gathered there, and the rest ran up now. Sir Simon laid his hand upon Dick Loftus.

"So! This was your doing!"

"Don't, uncle," said Dick, wincing; "I'm as vexed about it as you can be. I'd rather have been shot myself."

"That's what Bertie says. A pretty pair of nephews I've got!" continued Sir Simon, using his stick on the ground violently, to the

admiration of the surrounding throng. "The one smuggles pistols into the school, and the other brings 'em out and shoots a boy!"

"I didn't shoot him," said Dick.

"You were the cause of it, sir. If Talbot dies, and the thing comes to trial, were I the judge on the bench, I should transport you for seven years, Dick Loftus, as accessory in a second degree."

"Talbot isn't going to die," debated hardy Dick.

"And serve him right," put in Mr. Loftus, answering the semi-threat of Sir Simon. "Transportation for seven years would be just the thing Dick deserves. What right had the young idiot to meddle with my pistols?"

"What right had you to have pistols to be meddled with?" cried Sir Simon, retorting on Bertie. "And to keep 'em loaded? And to put 'em where Dick could get to them? I'd transport *you* for fourteen."

Mr. Loftus did not like the tables being

turned on him. He drew his head up with a jerk.

"And you the senior, save one, of the school, who might have been expected to be a pattern to the rest!" added Sir Simon, mercilessly. "You'd not have done it, would you, Gall?"

The senior boy, quietly looking on, lifted his eyes at being addressed. "I don't think I should, Sir Simon."

It was an inoffensive answer enough, in regard to words; but the quiet tone of condemnation, the half compassionate smile that accompanied it, angered Loftus out of his pride and his prudence.

"It's not likely he would. Pistols would be of no use to him. What do those city tradespeople want with pistols?"

The insolent retort was not lost on Sir Simon, for it gave him an opportunity that he was ever ready to seize upon; ever, it may be said, watching for—that of putting down the lofty notions of his otherwise favourite nephew.

"Those City tradespeople," he echoed, making a circular sweep with his stick, as if to challenge the attention of the crowd. "Hark at him! Hold your tongue, Gall; I'll talk. Has he changed ranks with Talbot, do you know, boys, and become a lord? City people! I'm his uncle; but he ignores that. I wasn't in the City; never aspired to it; I was only in Bermondsey; a tanner. A tanner, boys, as some of your fathers could tell you; Orville & Tubbs it was. Tubbs is there, tanning still; Tubbs & Sons; and a good snug business they've got. *I* wasn't born with a fortune in the bank, as some folks are; I had to make my way by hard work, and with very little education, and I did it. I had no Orville College to learn Latin and Greek and politeness at; though they do tell me I'm related to its founder. Perhaps I am; but it's only a sixteenth cousin, boys."

A shout of laughter: the boys' satisfaction had grown irrepressible. Sir Simon laughed with them.

"We were thirteen of us to get out in the world, boys and girls, and our father a clerk on three hundred a year. It seemed a fortune in those days; because a man's children expected to go out and work for themselves. I went out at twelve, boys; my father put me to a fishmonger, and I didn't like it; and he gave me a flogging for caprice, and sent me to a tanner's. I didn't like that—you should have smelt the skins!—but I had to stick to it. And I did stick to it, and in time made a business for myself, and when it got too large I took in my young foreman, Tubbs, and gave him a share. I was a common councilman, then; and a very grand honour I thought it to be such; but I didn't leave off work. Up early and to bed late, and making my abode amidst the skins in my yard, was I. Fortune came to me, boys; it comes to most people who patiently work for it; and they made me a sheriff of London, and in going up with an address to Court, the Queen knighted me: and that brings me with the handle to my name, which I assure

you I'm not at home with yet, and for months afterwards couldn't believe that it was me being spoken to. I retired from business then, and I bought Pond Place up here. I didn't buy it because it was near the college, and that Dr. Orville had been a sixteenth cousin, but because it suited me; and the situation and the air suited me. And that's how *I* come to be Sir Simon Orville: and what I've got I've humbly worked for. Mr. Loftus there was born a gentleman, as his father was before him, and he'd like me to go in for rank, and for quarterings on my carriage, and crests on my spoons, and to make believe that I'd never heard there was such a low thing as tanning amidst trades. Yah, boys! I hate pretension: and so does every sincere nature ever created. It's only a species of acted falsehood; it won't help us on the road to heaven."

A murmur of applause, and a slight clapping of hands. Sir Simon lifted his stick again.

"He despises the Galls, that lofty nephew

of mine; he lets you know that he does. Boys, allow me to tell you, that there's not a better man in all London than Joseph Gall, the head of the respectable firm of Gall & Batty. Substantial, too, Mr. Loftus."

Loftus stood like a pillar of salt, stony and upright, showing no sign whatever of his intense annoyance. These periodical revelations of Sir Simon's, given gratuitously to the boys on any provocation, were the very thorns of his life. At such moments it would have puzzled Loftus to tell which he despised most—the Galls as a whole, or his uncle as a unit.

"And now about this shooting business," resumed Sir Simon. "Where was the pistol fired from?"

"Just from this point, Sir Simon," spoke Leek, who was one of the greatest admirers Sir Simon possessed. "And here"—running a few paces onward—"is where the earl dropped."

It was growing too dusk to distinguish objects; the moon as yet did not give much

light; but Sir Simon stooped, and peered about with the utmost interest. Suddenly he rose and confronted them.

"Now, look here, you fellows! I dare say it was an accident; the boy got fingering the pistol, and it went off; he's not so much to blame for that. What he is to blame for, is the not confessing; it's dishonourable, mean, despicable; and for that he deserves no quarter. Try to find him out, boys; hunt him up; run him down; surely a stray word or a chance look may guide you to him. And whoever succeeds in bringing the truth to light, may come to me for the handsomest gold watch that is to be bought with money."

A deafening shout arose. In the midst of it the three strokes of the great bell were heard, calling the boys to evening study. They set off with a bound, all except Trace, who found himself detained by the hand of his uncle until the rest were out of hearing.

"Raymond, if mischief comes of this matter, it will be through you."

"Through me!" repeated Trace, taken

thoroughly aback. "Can you suppose, sir, I went shares with Bertie in buying the pistols? Or that I knew of his bringing them to school, loaded?"

"Not that. I am speaking of the other matter—Paradyne's. You are bitter against the very name of Paradyne; and I don't say you have no cause. But now, take my advice, Raymond. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't be the one to stir up the past against the boy. I have a feeling against it."

Sir Simon, leaving his words to tell, walked away towards home, and Trace stood looking after him, resenting the injunction. He was not a favourite, and he knew it; even that despicable Dick was preferred to him. As a matter of affection, perhaps Trace did not regret this; but his policy in life was to stand well with all. The tolerating of George Paradyne was an uncommonly bitter pill to swallow; and Trace would have given the world to reject it. But he scarcely saw his way clear to do this, if he wished to keep

friends with his uncle. And Trace threw a gratuitous and by no means complimentary word at the unfortunate boy, as he went off to be in time for his studies.

Scarcely was he out of sight, when Miss Brabazon came quietly up through the trees. She had put on a cloak and hood; and, as she threw back the latter her face looked white with a curious fear. Searching here, bending there, she seemed to be seeking for some traces of the last night's work. Now she bent her ear and listened, now she knelt down by the bench, feeling under it and about it. One might almost have thought she was seeking for a letter. So pre-occupied was she as not to hear the sound of footsteps.

"What are you looking for, Emma?"

The interruption was from Dr. Brabazon, who happened to be passing through the plantation. Emma started up with a cry.

"What is it, my dear? What are you doing here?"

"I—I—was thinking who could have done it, papa," she answered, in a frightened

whisper. "I mean that dreadful thing last night. If the boys all deny it—why, perhaps they are really not guilty. It—it was so very easy for a stranger, coming by chance through the plantation, to have picked up the pistol that Smart dropped, and fired it off without thought of harm. Without thought of harm, papa."

How pleadingly, yearningly the last words were spoken, Dr. Brabazon's own heart told him. He answered cheerfully, although it was beating with pain.

"Emma, I see what you are thinking of. But it could not have been. It was one of the boys beyond doubt, for he wore the college cap. Why do you let these fancies trouble you? Run home, child; run home."

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER BUTTER'S LODGINGS.

THE term had begun, as the Head Master expressed it, ungraciously. The mysterious and disagreeable accident to James Talbot was leading to endless discussion and dissension. The first desk utterly repudiated the notion that it could have been one of them, and tacitly, if not directly, accused the second; the second desk threw back the insinuation with all the insolence they dared to use. Lamb was one of these, and his name got mentioned (failing somebody else to fix it on) in connection with the charge. The suggestion spread, although

Brown minor, rather a crony of Lamb's, was ready to testify that Lamb had never stirred out of the hall that night after chapel; and did testify to it, in fact, with some confirmatory words of unnecessary strength. Lamb, a tall, thin fellow, was in a terrible rage; could not have been in a worse had he been guilty. Gall, the senior boy, said little; not having returned at the time, he did not consider it was his province to interfere; but Loftus, smarting personally under the affair, made himself exceedingly busy. And it was a very unusual thing for Loftus to do.

The boys, at their evening studies, sat at the low table in the well-lighted hall—a long table on trestles that ran down the middle of it, with benches around. They were ostensibly preparing their lessons for the morrow; in reality were discussing and bickering among themselves in an under-tone. You heard the bell ring for them in the last chapter, when they were in the plantation with Sir Simon Orville. Mr. Long sat at his

desk in a remote corner, paying no attention. Great in science, he always had his near-sighted spectacles buried in some abstruse book, and his ears also.

"Look here," spoke Loftus minor, who was burning to get at the offender quite as hotly as his brother Bertie, "when my uncle says he'll give a gold watch, why, he *will* give it; there's no sham; so if any of you fellows do know about this, just go in and earn it. It'll be a shame to let a watch go begging."

"It's an awful shame that a gold watch, or any such bribe should be needed," called out Loftus major. "Who but a sneak would shoot a fellow, and then shrink from avowing it, letting suspicion fall on the rest indiscriminately? A sneak, I say."

"Do you mean that for me, Mr. Loftus?" spluttered Lamb, who was sitting opposite to Loftus at the table. "Because if you do——"

"There you go, Lamb, you and your corky temper," interposed good-humoured Leek.

"You be quiet, Onions. I say that if he does, I'll make him prove his words."

There was a smothered laugh. The notion of Lamb's making a senior prove anything, was good, especially Loftus.

"I don't mean it for Lamb in particular, unless he chooses to take it to himself," coolly drawled Loftus. "I have no reason for supposing he can take it."

The semi-apology did not satisfy Lamb. He knew that he was called the "sneak," par excellence; he knew that he did many little underhand things to deserve it. Consequently he always strove to appear particularly white; and to have this grave suspicion thrown upon him was driving him wild.

"I believe that Loftus knows I was no more out last night than he was," said Lamb, giving his Virgil a passionate wrench, which tore the cover. "That you all know it."

"As far as I can understand, not a soul of you went out, except Smart and Loftus

minor," observed the senior boy, who really wished to heal the general discomfort. "None of you were missed."

"And that's true," said Lamb. "And if it comes to that, who is to say that it was not that new fellow did it, after all? Took up the pistol and shot it off by accident, and went and said what he did to screen himself."

"What new fellow? Do you mean Paradyne?" quickly asked Irby, following out some association of ideas in his mind.

"Paradyne, no! What could Paradyne have had to do with it? I mean the new master; that German fellow with an English name."

"Nonsense, Lamb!"

Lamb nodded his head oracularly. "It might have been."

It was a new phase of the question, and the boys looked up. Lamb continued. "Trace says he thinks he's a regular spy."

"By the way, where is Trace?" asked Gall, who had suddenly noticed that Trace,

usually so punctual at studies, was not present.

"It couldn't have been him," said Leek, regardless of the question as to Trace. "He saw the fellow making off; he said he wore the college cap."

"Your tongue is ever ready, Onions," was the rebuke of the senior boy. "It's not at all likely to have been Mr. Henry; but neither is it obliged to have been the fellow he saw making off. And if it was, the fellow might not have come out of the college; he may be an outsider. Get on with your work; there's really no cause to be worrying over it and suspecting each other."

The words acted as oil on the troubled waters, and they began to settle down to their books and exercises. But it's pleasanter to gossip than to learn.

"Why does Trace think the German's a spy?" asked Loftus minor.

"He's not German; he's English. A German would have his face covered with hair; this fellow shaves."

"Of course he's not German by birth," returned Dick; "anybody can see that. Onions said——"

"What's all that talking about?" roared out Mr. Long, suddenly becoming awake to the noise. "Is that the way you do your lessons?" And for a few moments, at any rate, silence supervened.

Where was Trace? I think I shall have to tell you. After digesting Sir Simon Orville's words in the plantation, he set off quickly, to be in time for the evening study, which was the preparation of lessons for the next day, and rarely lasted more than an hour. Running full pelt into the cloisters, he ran against one of the masters.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, thinking it was Mr. Baker; for the cloisters were in almost total darkness.

It was Mr. Henry; and when Trace became aware of the fact, his spirit rose up in rebellion at having called him "sir." A feeling of dislike to this new master was rife within him, having its source no doubt in the past

friendship the stranger had avowed for the unfortunate Captain Paradyne, and in his present evident intention to befriend the boy, and defend him against surreptitious lance-shafts. Trace was apt to be so prejudiced.

"Is it you, Trace?" cried Mr. Henry, recognizing the voice. "I would say a word to you."

"Be quick, if you please, then," was the half-discourteous answer. "We have only one hour to prepare everything, and I am late as it is."

"You have heard probably that George Paradyne is to stay here," began Mr. Henry, leading the way into the open quadrangle, where it was lighter, and there could be no danger of eaves-droppers.

"Yes; and I am surprised at Dr. Brabazon. My uncle, Sir Simon Orville, sanctions it too. He—he——"

Trace stopped. The generally cool voice seemed overflowing with passion; and Mr. Henry looked at him in the light of the rising moon.

"You do not like the decision!"

"*Like* it!" repeated Trace; "I think it is an infamous thing. And we are put upon our honour not to tell! It is the first time I ever knew it was right to conceal crime."

"The boy has committed no crime, if you allude to him."

"His father did."

"And his father expiated it with his life. Should not this be sufficient for you?"

Trace answered by a gesture of contempt. Mr. Henry threw his luminous eyes on him, their sad expression, so namelessly attractive, conspicuous even in the subdued light.

"I have had a great deal of trouble of one sort or another," said the master, in a low tone. "It has taught me some things: and, amidst them, *never* to add, by act of mine, to the grief of others. Oh, Trace! if you did but know the true, tender compassion we feel for them, when dire trouble has fallen on ourselves! if you could but see how cruel their life is, without additional reproach!".

"And did Paradyne—the man—bring no

trouble upon us?" burst out Trace. "Did he not ruin my father, and drive him into exile, and break up our home, and kill my mother? She died here; here at my uncle's; and you may see her gravestone in the churchyard hard by. Trouble! Did the man not bring enough upon us?"

"Heaven knows he did," was the sad answer. "I do not seek to depreciate it; but the boy is innocent. He does not deserve to have it visited upon him."

"Doesn't he!" retorted Trace, utterly angered out of his usual civility.

"Why no, of course he does not," rather sharply resumed Mr. Henry, feeling now how hard must be this contending nature. "Look at the thing dispassionately; imagine for a moment the case reversed: that your father was the guilty man, and Paradyne's the one on whom the blow fell: should you not think it cruelly unjust and unjustifiable if he pursued revenge on you?"

Trace became half-speechless with indignation. "I cannot imagine anything of the

sort, sir," he haughtily said, using the "sir" as he might have used it to an offending footman. "I think you are forgetting yourself: we are gentlemen at this college."

"I did not wish to offend you; only to put the matter in the light that it should, as I think, be looked at. What had young Paradyne done—a lad of twelve, then—to invoke this evil on himself? He was not responsible for his father's actions; he could not hinder them."

"It appears to me that we have had enough of this," observed Trace. "Perhaps you will tell me why you are detaining me from my studies to say it?"

"To bespeak your kindness for the boy,—your silence, in fact; that he may be allowed to pursue his course here unmolested. It will be repaid to you many-fold."

"Then you can make yourself easy; I am not going to betray him. Dr. Brabazon has put us on our honour."

The acknowledgment was not graciously expressed, but Mr. Henry saw he should get

nothing better. "And now, Trace," he continued, "I have a question to ask you on a different subject. When that pistol went off in the plantation last night, I met a boy, supposed to be one of the seniors, stealing away. Was it you?"

There had been many little points in the interview not palatable to Mr. Trace; but all put together were as nothing compared to this. His complexion was peculiar, apt to turn of a salmon-colour on occasions of rare provocation, as it did now; but his reply was cold and calm.

"You had better take care what you say, Mr. Henry! *I* in the plantation at the time! stealing away! No, I was not. It is against rules to go out after prayers, and I am not in the habit of breaking them. I wish I had been there! and dropped upon those two juniors who were fools enough to take out a loaded pistol."

"Hush, that's enough: I would not do you an injury for the world," said Mr. Henry, in the gentlest and kindest tone. "I did

think it was you; but I kept it to myself, as you perceived."

"Thank you," said Trace, half in allusion to the wish, half ironically. "I suppose I may go in now."

"Yes," said Mr. Henry, "that is all. Good night, Trace."

He went out at the great gates as he spoke. But Trace, instead of hastening in to his studies, that he seemed so anxious over, came to the conclusion to delay them yet a little longer. He had a mind to track Mr. Henry.

Following him at a safe distance, keeping under cover of any bit of shade cast by the moon, he saw him pass the front of the college, and make for some houses round by the shops. Mr. Henry was looking about him as if uncertain of his geography; finally he paused before a row of small "genteel" dwellings, and entered one of them.

"Number five!" exclaimed Trace, taking his observations. "I'm blest if that's not the place where the Paradynes live!" he

continued with sudden conviction, for he had been gathering a little information for himself in the course of the afternoon. "A nice lot to know! Birds of a feather. I shouldn't wonder but he had a share of the spoil in Liverpool! He confesses to having known them well. If ever a firebrand came into a school, it's this same German master. I'll look after him a bit."

And, having so far set operations afloat, Mr. Trace galloped back to school as fast as his legs would carry him.

Skirting the playground at the back of the college, nearly opposite the large bay window of the master's study, and of the boys' dormitories above it, was a small dwelling-house of rough stone, known amidst the boys as "Mother Butter's." Mother Butter, a tall spare angular lady of fifty, kept a cow and a donkey, and a good many fowls. She sold a little butter, she sold poultry and fresh eggs; she sold choice herbs, mushroom ketchup; lavender, and other sweet dried flowers to scent drawers. Formerly she used to make

"bullseyes" for the junior college boys; small square delectable tablets, composed of butter, treacle, and peppermint, and did in this a roaring trade. But differences arose, beginning at first with long credit, and going on to open rupture, and one day last term she flung her treacle saucepan amidst the crew, vowing she would make no more. The saucepan struck Gall's trencher, denting it in and blackening his ear, nearly stunning him besides. Smarting under the infliction, he issued on the spot a general order that no more bullseyes were to be consumed of Mother Butter's, though she "made them till she was blue." Since then there had been open and perpetual warfare. Mrs. Butter carried tales of them to the masters: the boys entered on a system of petty annoyance: their palates suffering under the deprivation of those choice sweetmeats, it was not likely they would spare her. They painted her cow green; they cut off the plume of a handsome cock, the pride of the whole poultry; they tied a bell to the donkey's tail when it was

charged with two panniers of eggs, thereby causing the startled animal to smash the lot; and they laid a huge tin plate across the top of her low kitchen chimney. Nearly all these miseries were securely effected at night; and as Mrs. Butter watched vigilantly and detected nothing, her surprise equalled her rage. Dr. Brabazon had levied a contribution for the value of the eggs; but that did not stop the fun.

It was a pretty place to look at, this dwelling-house of Mrs. Butter's, with the clematis on its stone walls, the bright flowers before it, and the little paddock behind; and it so happened that Mr. Henry, seeking for lodgings, heard there were some to let here. He found a neat plain sitting-room, and a closet opening from it which just held the bed and wash-hand stand, with space for his portmanteau, if he put the chair out. Mrs. Butter said she would cook and wait upon him; the rent asked was low, and he made the bargain, unconscious man, offhand. The previous occupant had been an outdoor servant of

the college, and you may imagine the effect Mr. Henry's choice produced on the school. Not until he moved into it was he aware of the contemptuous feeling it excited, and then not of its extent. "It suits me," said he, quietly and decisively.

He saw no reason why it should not suit him. It had been done up nicely afresh, and was convenient for the college. He might have thought it good enough, even though he had not been obliged to look at every sixpence that he spent. The boys might have thought it good enough, but for its being in the house of the obnoxious Mother Butter, and for a servant's previous occupation of it.

You know the old saying, my friends: "One man must not look at a horse, while another may leap over the hedge." Just so was it here. Had somebody great and grand —a duke, let us say, for example—taken a fancy to that room, and come and occupied it, the boys would have been seized with a sudden sense of its desirability as a lodging, had its photograph taken as a model of

beauty, and extolled it abroad; they might even have relaxed a little in their polite attentions to Mother Butter; but as one whom they were half-way prepared to regard as an enemy entered upon it, the case was different. In truth, a strong feeling, independent of this, was setting in against the foreign master.

The declining sun shone full on Mr. Henry, as he sat at the window of his room. He had taken possession of it some days now, and things were settling down into ordinary routine. James Talbot was nearly well again, and the commotion had subsided; but the affair remained in the same doubt, none of the boys had confessed, and suspicion was partially diverting itself from them. This room of Mr. Henry's faced the college and playground, and he liked to draw his table to the window. He was dotting down on a piece of paper his probable expenses; was calculating how little it would be possible for him to live upon, and how much save out of his hundred and twenty pounds a year salary.

He had applied to a house in Paternoster Row for some translation to do: his idea had been to get private teaching in his free hours, but he found Orville Green too small a place to admit of the probability of much. The answer from the Paternoster Row house had just come in: they would give him the translation of a scientific German work; but the terms offered with it were very poor indeed. He intended to accept them; he said to himself that he had no other resource but to accept them, and they were being put down in his pencilled calculation.

Lodgings, food, laundress, clothes, and sundries. The lodging and laundress must be paid, the sundries must be found, those hundred and one trifles that arise one knows not how; in the clothes he could not stint himself, for he must appear as a gentleman: indeed, it would have been against Mr. Henry's natural instincts not to do so. But the food!—ah! he could deny himself there as much as he pleased; and the "much" seemed to be unlimited. To a

young man these self-denials in prospective seem so easy.

He laid down his pencil, and leaned his head upon his hand. In his face, as he looked upwards; in his sad dark eyes fixed on the blue of the sky, but seeing it not, there was an expression that seemed to speak of utter friendlessness. A great care was upon him that evening; care of one sort was always upon him, but a different one had suddenly arisen to make itself heard. *Was his health giving way?* Doubts of it had occurred now and again in the past few weeks and been driven away without much notice; but since crossing over to England, his strength was as a mere reed. What if the capability to work were taken from him? Certain words came into his mind,—"Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Was *he* destined to be one of these useless trees, bearing no fruit? doing no good in his generation? The hot tears came into his eyes, and he breathed a silent word to One who was seated beyond that bright blue sky.

George Paradyne dashed in. "I say, Mr. Henry," began he, without preliminary ceremony of any description, "I shan't like this Orville College."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Henry, putting his paper into a drawer, and his pencil into his pocket.

"There's something up against me. The fellows won't let me join in their play."

"Oh, nonsense, George."

"But it isn't nonsense. They were at a fault just now for one to make up a game—it's that noisy one, you know, that takes eighteen fellows, nine on a side, and they had only seventeen. 'Oh, here comes another,' I heard some one say as I ran up; but when they saw it was me, there was a sudden silence, and every one of the lot turned away."

"I should say, 'When they saw it was I,' George," observed Mr. Henry, not really to correct his grammar, but to divert his thoughts from the subject.

"Oh, bother," answered George, his large,

bright, grey eyes laughing. "But, I say, I wonder what can be the reason?"

"Some little prejudice, perhaps," carelessly replied Mr. Henry. "There exists something of the sort, I fancy, against the out-door pupils. Be brave, and hold on your right course; you will live it down."

"I'm not afraid of that," answered George. "I should like to know, though, what it is the boys have got in their heads. When are you coming to see us again?" he halted to say, as he was hastening away as unceremoniously as he had come in. "Mamma says she has something to ask you that she forgot the other night."

"Does she? I will come one of these first evenings."

George Paradyne vaulted away, and Mr. Henry sat on alone. His jealous eyes—jealous for the welfare of another—had not failed to detect the feeling against George Paradyne; but this confirmation of it fell upon him with a sort of shock, and he was as certain in his own mind that the origina-

tion of it was Raymond Trace, as that it existed.

He was right. Mr. Raymond Trace, in his bitter resentment against the Paradynes, was breaking his word of honour in the spirit, if not in the letter. He did not speak of the past, it is true; but by dint of whispers, of insinuations, he was setting the school against George Paradyne, and contriving it in such a way that none could have suspected him to be the originator. He was also fanning the flame against Mr. Henry; and in his self-righteousness he thought he was doing the most natural and justifiable thing.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. GALL ABROAD.

AND now, not to make a mystery of it to you, my boys, any longer, I will tell you that it *was* Raymond Trace who had fired the pistol. Mr. Henry was not mistaken in his recognition of Trace; and what's more, he knew that he was not; though at the time he did not know his name, or who he was. Mr. Trace had silently quitted the college after prayers on a little private expedition of his own; in his hurry he caught up Mr. Long's cap, not noticing the mistake; and was rushing through the plantation when the sound of hushed voices caused him to

slacken his footsteps and advance cautiously, lest he should be seen himself. Peeping through the trees, he discerned Smart and Dick Loftus, each flourishing a pistol about like two young madmen; and Trace, making a movement in his surprise, betrayed his presence. You know what followed: the boys flew off with one of the pistols; the other Trace took up, and presently fired it off. He fired it heedlessly, without thought of harm, never supposing it was loaded; with an idea perhaps of further scaring the two decamping boys; neither had he heard the approach of Talbot. When he found the pistol *was* loaded, and that some mischief had ensued, he was startled nearly out of his senses, quite out of his presence of mind.

His straightforward course, as everybody knows, would have been to go up and see who was wounded; but I'm afraid Trace's was not a very straightforward nature; and there was also the instinctive desire to conceal his having come abroad. Not a boy in the college was more solicitous of appearing

to keep the rules than Trace; and he had grown to be looked upon as a model to the rest. Dropping the pistol, away he stole, obeying instinct only, too terrified to be able to think calmly, and came face to face with the new foreign master. Up went his hand to his face to hide it, and away he backed amidst the trees; stealing on noiselessly for some short distance, and then tearing back to school helter-skelter. It was only when he came to hang up the cap that he discovered the mistake he had made in taking out a master's. He glided into the hall, sat down behind the nearest desk, and gradually let his presence be noticed. When the news came presently in, Trace was talking with Irby and Brown major, and rose up in the same consternation as the rest.

You may therefore imagine what his sensations were when the Head Master subsequently appealed to his honour; to his, in common with that of the rest of the school. He could not declare himself; the time had gone by; it was quite impossible that he,

having concealed it, could come forth with the avowal at that, the eleventh hour. Over and over again he blamed his folly and his cowardice for having stolen away; he would give all the money his pockets contained—and money was often a scarce commodity with Mr. Trace—to have bravely gone up to the wounded boy and declared the truth of the accident. He called himself a fool; he called himself a coward; he called himself sundry other disparaging names: but that it was not in his habit to do it, he might have sworn at himself. Not for the mere act in itself, the having fired the pistol; that was almost a pure accident; but for having concealed that it was he who did it.

However, his course was entered upon, and all he could do now was to hope and trust that he might never be discovered. While this hope was filling every crevice of his heart, making itself heard hourly in his brain, there came the startling question of the German master—"Was it not you I met?" Trace could only be indignant and

say it was not; but the disagreeable doubt, whether he had been positively recognized or not, caused him to fear and hate Mr. Henry with a bitter fear and hatred. He thought it was but a suspicion, not a recognition, for Mr. Henry's quiet and cautious manner deceived him, and he grew to believe that his denial had borne its intended fruit. So the fear subsided, but the hatred ripened; and it might perhaps bring trouble in the future.

A sunny day towards the close of September, and Miss Brabazon went abroad with Rose. She was about to pay a visit to Mrs. Paradyne; not only because it was her custom to call on the friends of the outdoor boys, but to show, in this instance, all she could of consideration and kindness. The Head Master and Miss Brabazon were in one respect the very opposite to Trace. Trace thought inherited misfortune a legitimate target for lances of contempt, if not of reproach; *they* deemed such people, so blameless and unhappy, should receive all of gentle commiseration that the world can show.

Miss Rose went mincing along in her short petticoats, the tails to her Leghorn hat flying behind, as she turned her little vain head from side to side, looking if any chance college boy might be abroad to cast his admiring eyes upon her. Not seeing one, she darted up to Mrs. Gall's governess, who was walking about the grounds of Mr. Gall's residence with some of the children, and then darted back to her sister.

"There's Jessie and Kate Gall, Emma. Can't you call on their mamma, while I walk about with them? Mrs. Gall is at the window. I know her by the yellow in her cap."

Emma Brabazon looked across the lawn at the handsome house, and saw a yellow silk screen standing near one of the windows. She laughed.

"You can stay here, however, Rose," she said, nodding to the governess. "I will call for you as I come back."

Glad that it had so happened, for Miss Rose had insisted on accompanying her rather against her will, Emma Brabazon walked on

to Prospect Terrace, as the houses were named, perhaps because they faced a brick-field, and inquired for Mrs. Paradyne. A rather faded lady, sitting in a small upper room, styled by courtesy a drawing-room, rose to receive her. She was tall and slender, with a fair thin face, and bright dark eyes. Her cap was of real lace; her gown, a delicate silk, looked faded, like herself; her manners were quiet and self-possessed. At the first glance Miss Brabazon could not fail to perceive that she was essentially a lady.

"It is very kind of you to come," she observed, when they had spoken a little together, Miss Brabazon sitting on the chintz sofa, herself on an opposite chair. "Living in the obscure way my circumstances compel me to live, in these small lodgings, I had not expected of course that any one would call upon me."

"But I am very pleased to do it," said Miss Brabazon, "not only because your son is at the college; and I have brought papa's card," she added, laying it on the table.

"He has not time to pay visits himself; but he bade me say he hoped you would come to see us, and that we should be good friends."

"I visit nowhere," said Mrs. Paradyne, a certain fretfulness observable in her tone. "People do not care to invite those who cannot return it to them. Do not think me ungracious," she hastened to add; "I was not speaking in answer to Dr. Brabazon's kind message, but rather thinking of my past experience."

"I hope your son likes the school," observed Emma, rather at a loss what to say.

"He likes the school; he does not like his companions," answered Mrs. Paradyne.

"No!" exclaimed Emma, taken by surprise. "Why not?"

"They seem to shun him; they do shun him, there's no doubt of it. It is making me miserable: I could not sleep all last night for thinking of it. There's scarcely a boy will speak to him, or treat him as a companion;—my dear son, who is so bright and good."

Amidst a mass of confused ideas, two in particular loomed out dimly in Emma Brabazon's mind—that Mrs. Paradyne was rather absorbed in self, and that her son was to her a very idol.

"Can those boys have betrayed him?" she involuntarily exclaimed.

"Betrayed what?" questioned Mrs. Paradyne.

And Emma Brabazon blushed to the very roots of her hair. She had been prepared to offer every kind and considerate sympathy if Mrs. Paradyne herself alluded to the past, but certainly had not intended gratuitously to enter upon it. There was no help for it now; and she spoke a few words of the discovery made by Trace—that he had recognised George Paradyne to be the son of a gentleman who had injured his father.

"Yes," said Mrs. Paradyne, folding her delicate hands in meek resignation on her lap, "I was sure something disagreeable would ensue as soon as George came home and told me that the sons of Loftus and

Trace—as the firm used to be—were at the college. It is most unfortunate that he should happen to have come to the same."

"Yes, it is—for your son's sake," murmured Emma, who felt almost guilty herself.

"I expected nothing less, I assure you, Miss Brabazon, than to find my son come home with a note from the Head Master, dismissing him from the college. I——"

"Oh, if you only knew papa, you would not think it," she interrupted, gathering her scattered courage. "He would be all the more likely to retain him in it. The only fear was about the others, the Loftus boys and Trace. If their friends had raised any objection—but it has been quite the contrary," she hastened to add, quitting the unpleasant point; "and papa charged the boys on their honour not to breathe a word of the past to the school."

"They have breathed something, or others have; for George is being shunned most unjustifiably. Ah, well; it is but a natural

consequence of the miserable past; I said it would cling to us for life, an incubus of disgrace. And so it will."

"Papa would like to tell you how greatly he sympathises with you," said Emma, eagerly. "I hope you will accept our friendship, and let us testify our respect in every way that we can. Unmerited misfortune is so sad to bear."

"I thought it would have killed me," was the answer made by Mrs. Paradyne, her tone one of discontented reproach—reproach for the husband who had gone. "I asked myself what right he had to bring this misery upon me; to entail on his children an inheritance of shame; I asked what he could have done with all the money; and there was nothing to answer me but the mocking word, What? When I look on my darling, I can hardly forbear to cry out against his memory. Pardon me, Miss Brabazon, I think this is the first time I have spoken of it to a stranger, but your words of kindness opened my heart."

"Have you many children?" inquired Miss Brabazon.

"Two sons,—George and an elder one. I have George only with me; the other is out, working for his living. And I have a daughter."

"Is she with you?"

"She is a teacher in a school in Derbyshire. I seem to be quite isolated from friends and family," continued Mrs. Paradyne, in a fretful tone. "It is but another natural result of the wretched past. I suppose my boy in this new college will be equally friendless."

"Your son has one firm friend in our new German master, Mr. Henry," was the reply of Miss Brabazon.

It was intended to be a reassuring one; but Mrs. Paradyne seemed to take it up in quite an opposite light. Her faded brow contracted; her eyes assumed a hard expression.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Brabazon; I would rather not speak of Mr. Henry. When

I remember that it is through him we came up to this college, where my boy is being subjected to these slights and insults, I cannot think of him with patience."

"Was it through Mr. Henry you came to Orville?"

"It was. He wrote to us from Heidelberg, saying he had made an engagement with a first-class college in England, and suggested that George should be placed at it. He could give him so much of his time, he said. And this is the result!—that we find Raymond Trace here and the Loftus boys."

"But surely Mr. Henry did it for the best?"

"He intended it for the best, no doubt, but it has not turned out so for George. What I think is this—that Mr. Henry, knowing past circumstances and the cloud they cast upon us, might have made some inquiries as to who the scholars were at Orville College, before he brought George to it, and put me to the expense and trouble and pain of coming here."

The exceeding injustice of the reasoning—nay, the ingratitude—brought to Emma Brabazon a deeper conviction of the innate selfishness of Mrs. Paradyne. She supposed that her great misfortunes had hardened her; and the saying, so keen and true, arose to her mind,—"Adversity hardens the heart, or it opens it to Paradise."

"You knew Mr. Henry well in Germany, I believe? He was professor in the college where your son was a scholar?"

"Yes, he was," replied Mrs. Paradyne.

Miss Brabazon took her leave, and went away, a dim idea resting on her that she had seen Mrs. Paradyne before; or some one resembling her. Ever and anon, during the interview, an expression had dawned over her countenance that seemed strangely familiar. "But it was only when her face looked pleasant that the idea arose," thought Emma Brabazon, as she turned into the avenue and crossed the lawn leading to Mrs. Gall's.

Miss Rose was making herself at home,

and had her things off. "I'm going to stay tea, Emma," was her salutation to her sister. "You can go home without me."

It was her way. She did not say, "May I stay?" but took will and decision into her own hands. In great things Emma quietly corrected her; in trifles Rose was yielded to. Emma looked at Mrs. Gall, a slight, thin, kind little woman, with a sharp red nose.

"Do let her stay, Miss Brabazon. William is coming home to go out to dinner with his papa, and the children and governess are to have a pleasant hour with me. See how anxious Jessie is that you should say yes."

Emma laughed and acquiesced. Upon which Rose waltzed into the governess's room with the news, and watched her sister away. It was scarcely tea-time yet, and Miss Brabazon found she had leisure to go round to Mrs. Butter's, whom she had occasion to see about some mushroom-ketchup. Mr. Henry was standing at his low sitting-room window as she passed, dreamily watching the boys in the playground, for school was

over. They were whooping, halloaing, running, as it is in the nature of schoolboys to do; and a little army of them had gathered at the palings, looking this way. The master's face wore the sad look that had previously so struck Miss Brabazon, and she turned aside to speak to him.

"I have been to see Mrs. Paradyne," she said, thinking the information might give him pleasure, as she stood at the open window.

"Have you!" he answered, his countenance and his luminous eyes lighting up. "How very kind of you, Miss Brabazon!"

"Poor thing! What terrible trouble she must have seen! She carries it in her face, in the tones of her voice, in her manner; all tell of it. She says she shall never overcome the blow."

"But did she speak of it to you, Miss Brabazon?" he inquired in some surprise.

"Yes, but it was my fault; I inadvertently alluded to it," replied Miss Brabazon, dropping her voice. "I was so vexed with

myself. Mrs. Paradyne tells me there is another son who is out somewhere."

"Ah, yes," returned Mr. Henry; and his dreamy eyes went far away again, as if he could see the other son in the distance.

"But she seems quite rapt up in this, her second; it struck me somehow that she does not care for the elder," continued Miss Brabazon, in a pleasant tone of confidence. "She tells me it was you who recommended the college to her."

He looked for a minute at Miss Brabazon before he answered: it almost seemed to her as if he divined Mrs. Paradyne's reproachful words. She waited for an answer.

"After I had made the agreement with Dr. Brabazon to come here, I wrote to Mrs. Paradyne. She wanted, as I knew, to place her son at a first-class school, and I thought I might give him some little extra attention."

"Just so. It was very kind of you. Mrs. Paradyne has an idea that the boys are shunning him," added Miss Brabazon.

"I believe they are. But why, I cannot

find out, for I don't think they have any clue to the past. I tell George Paradyne he will live it down."

"To be sure he will. There is a daughter also, I find—a teacher in a school."

For one moment Mr. Henry turned and looked sharply, questioningly, at Miss Brabazon; as if he would ask how much more Mrs. Paradyne had told her. But it was evident that he shunned the subject; and he made no comment whatever on this additional item of news. An idea flashed over Miss Brabazon that Mr. Henry was attached to this young lady; but why it did so she could not have told.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Henry."

He bowed his adieu, and Miss Brabazon went round to the house-door, and thence to the kitchen. Mrs. Butter was standing there in a fury, surrounded by coils of string and a heap of paper.

"Look here, Miss Emma," was her salutation; and she was familiar with Miss Brabazon from having formerly lived servant

in the college. "If those boys don't have something done to them, it's a shocking shame. There comes a railway porter to the door five minutes ago—'A parcel for you, ma'am,' he says to me, 'fourpence to pay!' Well, I was expecting a parcel from my brother, and I paid the fourpence and took it in. 'What on earth has made Bill tie it up with all this string for, and wrap it round with all this paper?' says I as I undid it. First string, and then paper; then string, and then paper; and curious round holes bored in all of it, as if done with a big iron skewer. But it never struck me—no, Miss Emma, it never struck me; and I went on and on till I came to the last wrap, and was bending over that to see whatever it could be, done up so careful, when a live mouse jumped out in my face. I shrieked out so, that it brought the German gentleman in—he thought I was afire. Between us we caught the mouse, and there he is, in a pail o' water, which is where them boys ought to be. The depth of 'em! boring them holes to

keep the animal alive, and getting a railway porter to come with it, as bold as brass!"

Emma Brabazon, staid lady of thirty though she was, stood coughing behind her handkerchief. "But how do you know it was the boys?" she asked.

"Know!" wrathfully retorted Mrs. Butter. "There's fifty faces turned on to the house now from the playground, if there's one; and all of 'em as meek as lambs! Just look at 'em!"

Thinking she would leave the ketchup for a more auspicious occasion, Miss Brabazon went away, leaving Mrs. Butter fuming and grumbling. Sundry faces certainly were still scanning the house; but Miss Brabazon appeared to see nothing, and went on her way. In turning round by the chapel, she encountered the senior boy.

"Did you send that present to Mrs. Butter just now, Gall?"

"A present, Miss Brabazon?"

"A live mouse done up in a parcel."

Gall stared, and then laughed. He knew

nothing of it. The seniors were above those practical tricks. "It was the second desk, no doubt," he said. "Am I to inquire into it, Miss Brabazon?"

"No, not from me. But they should not tease the old woman beyond bearing."

"She is of a cranky temper," said Gall.

"And the boys make it worse. Gall," added Miss Brabazon, her tone changing, and the senior boy thought it bore a touch of fear, "you have not discovered yet who fired the pistol?"

"Not at all. We begin to think now, Miss Brabazon, that it was not one of us."

"Ah," she said, turning her face away. "What is the cause of this feeling against the new boy, George Paradyne?" she continued, and the question seemed to come abruptly after the pause.

"I don't know," replied Gall, excessively surprised that it should be asked him. "I perceive there is some feeling against Paradyne; I suppose because he is an outsider."

"Gall, you have more sense, more thought,

than some of your companions, and I can speak to you confidentially, as one friend would speak to another," resumed Miss Brabazon. "Ascertain, if you can, the cause of this feeling, without making a fuss, you know; and tell me what it is. Soothe it down if possible; make the boy's way easy amidst you. I am sure he does not deserve to be shunned."

Gall touched his cap, much flattered, and went on his way. Not into school: he had been invited out to dinner with his father, as Mrs. Gall had said, and had leave from Dr. Brabazon until eleven o'clock. This gave a golden opportunity to the seniors, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. In recording the doings of a large school, where truth is adhered to, the bad has to be told with the good.

Smoking was especially forbidden: nothing was so certainly followed by punishment as the transgression of the rule. Not only was it sternly interdicted, but Dr. Brabazon talked kindly and earnestly to the boys in private. The habit when acquired early was

most pernicious, he reiterated to them; frequently inducing paralysis by middle age. He gave Gall special instructions to be watchful; and this was well; the senior boy was faithful to the trust reposed in him, and, though the vigilance of the masters could be eluded, it was not so easy to escape his. But on occasions like this, when Gall's back was turned, certain of the seniors who liked a cigar, or pipe, or screw—anything—when they could get it, seized on the opportunity, in defiance of rules and the Head Master.

They set about the recreation this evening in the privacy of their chamber. There were seven beds in it, occupied by Gall, Loftus, Trace, Irby, Fullarton, Savage, and Brown major. Taking off their jackets and putting out the candle, they drew the window up to its height slowly and gingerly, and lighted their cigars. Not Trace: he had never been seen with anything of the sort in his mouth; and it always made Brown major sick, fit to die; but he considered it manly to persevere. There they stood at the window, puffing

away, laughing and talking in an under-tone. News of Mrs. Butter's present had run the round of the school, and the seniors, though loftily superior to such things in public, did not disdain to enjoy that and other interesting events in private. That lady's domicile was in full view; her large dog lay in the garden. It was the fourth dog she had tried, and those wicked reptiles (one of Mrs. Butter's laudatory names for them) had made friends with each animal in succession, and so bribed him to their interests.

"I say, what is it that's up against Paradyne?" suddenly asked Brown major, glad of any opportunity to get that miserable cigar out of his mouth.

Nobody answered: the boys were too lazy, or the cigars too exacting. That Brown major had a trick of bringing up unpleasant topics. He asked again.

"He had no business to be put in our class," said Savage at length.

"Jove, no! But that wasn't his fault."

"An outsider and all," continued Savage.

"It's the second desk, though, that are making the set at him."

"What has he done to them?"

"Bother!" said Savage, who was in some difficulty about his cigar.

Brown major was not to be put down; talking was more convenient than smoking just now. "Do you know, Trace?"

"It's no affair of mine," replied Trace coldly, and Irby exchanged a meaning glance with him in the starlight.

"This beastly cigar won't draw at all," exclaimed Savage.

"No, they won't," assented Fullarton, in much wrath; "and I paid threepence apiece for them." For the treat this evening was his. "It's a regular swindle."

"The best cigars——"

"Hist! Who's that?"

The warning came from Trace. Not being occupied as the rest were, his attention was awake, and a sound like a cough had caught his ear from underneath the window. Out went the heads and the cigars, which was a

great want of caution. On the gravel walk below, pacing about before the Head Master's study, whose large bay window abutted outwards, was Mr. Henry.

"Take care, you fellows," murmured Trace; "it's that German spy."

In came the cigars. The boys, snatching them from their lips, held them behind, back-handed, and put out their heads again.

"What makes you call him a spy, Trace?" whispered Loftus.

"Because I know he is one. Mind! he saw the cigars: I watched him look up. I wonder what he is doing there."

The idea of a spy in the school—and he one of the masters—was not at all an agreeble prospect, and the smokers felt a sort of chill. "How do you know he is one, Trace?" asked Brown major.

"That's my business. I tell you that he *is*, and that's enough. I'd give half a crown to know what he is walking there for! He can't have any business there."

For the walk was a solitary walk, not leading to any particular spot; of course open to the inmates of the college, but nobody ever thought of going there at night. Hence the wonder. Perhaps its solitude may have made its attraction for Mr. Henry: quiet and still it lay, underneath the stars, but a minute or two's distance from his lodgings. The boys, peeping out still with hushed breath, saw him presently stroll away in the direction of his home, making no sign that he had observed them.

"Mark you," said Fullarton, much put out, "the fellow has stationed himself in those low-lived rooms of Mother Butter's to be a spy upon us. Trace is right."

But not one of them had known that during this little episode Brown minor came into the room on some mission to his brother, and had seen the red ends of the five cigars, just then held backwards. Divining that it might not be deemed a convenient moment for intrusion, young Mr. Brown withdrew

quietly, leaving his errand unfulfilled; went back to his own room, and there whispered the news confidentially that the seniors were smoking.

CHAPTER VII.

MR. LAMB IMPROVES HIS MIND IN PRIVATE.

RATHER to the consternation of the first desk, though perhaps not very much to their surprise, Mr. Long brought a charge against them—that they had been smoking. It was the morning following Gall's holiday; and Mr. Long waylaid three or four of the seniors as they were filing into the school-hall after chapel. Gall of course knew nothing of it. His nose had been greeted with an unusual scent on his entering the chamber the previous night, when the boys were all in bed and asleep, but he was wise enough never to take cognizance of things that did not fall

under his immediate observation. Mr. Long addressed himself to civil Trace.

"Trace, I charge you, speak the truth. Were you smoking?"

"No, Mr. Long, I was not. I never smoke."

"I *can't* smoke, sir," put in Brown major eagerly. "Smoking wouldn't agree with me."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Long, but I think whoever has carried this story to you, might have been better occupied in minding his own business," observed Loftus, boldly. "I wonder you take notice of tales brought by a rat."

Mr. Long flushed a little, but was not to be put down. He awarded every one that slept in the senior room, except Gall and Trace, a severe punishment: lessons to do out of hours. Gall, from his absence, could not have been in the affair, and the denial of Trace was believed. If Lamb was the sneak of the school, Trace was the Pharisee, and considered by the masters accordingly. But

that Mr. Long was conscious of feeling rather small himself on the subject of listening to "a rat"—whom *he* took to mean Lamb—he might have laid the offence before the Head Master: as it was, he dealt with it himself. There was much dissatisfaction rife at the first desk that day.

Had a very angel from heaven come down to tell them the informant was not Mr. Henry, they had scarcely listened. He was their rat. Even Loftus and Irby, the two who had been inclined to like the German master, turned against him. Gall also, in his private thoughts, considered it a gratuitous interference.

"I told you I knew the fellow was a spy," cried Trace, speaking vehemently in his condemning resentment.

A spy from henceforth, in their estimation, and to be looked upon as such: one who would have the whole school armed against him.

But now, the informant was not Mr. Henry —as I daresay you have divined: the real

one was Lamb. When Brown minor carried back the news to his chamber of what he had seen, Lamb, who slept there, treasured it up, and whispered it to Mr. Long the first thing in the morning. Not a single boy, save himself, would have told. The whole lot of juniors, from the second desk downwards, would have scorned it: they were too fond of escapades themselves, to tell of the seniors; not to speak of the hidings—to use their own language—they would have been treated to in private. In this instance Lamb was not suspected, the suspicion having fixed itself on Mr. Henry.

Something almost amounting to a rebellion took place in the quadrangle after morning school; and perhaps no man had ever been called so many hard names as the unfortunate foreign master. Paradyne was not there; being an outsider, and not in favour besides, he had gone home at once; or the news of the accusation might have reached Mr. Henry. A cad! a sneak! a German spy! What was to be done? asked the enraged boys, one of

another. Well, nothing much could be done, except send him to Coventry. Not being the Head Master, they had not the authority to dismiss him from his place; neither, as the affair had its rise in that forbidden fruit, tobacco, could they be demonstrative in the hearing of the masters.

"Let's go to him," foamed Savage. "Let's have it out."

"Better not," advised Fullarton, who, as purchaser of the cigars, felt a trifle more insecure than the rest, and naturally wished the affair to die away. "There'd only be a row. You know you never can keep your temper, Savage."

"Temper be bothered," cried Brown major. "He ought to be told that we've found him out."

"Then let Trace go. Trace can keep his."

Trace declined. "He'd rather not speak to the fellow."

"I'll go," said Loftus.

Away he went, on the spur of the moment,

nearly the whole lot at his heels. Brown major walked into the room with him; Fullarton pushed in also, to see that peace was kept. Mrs. Butter, in a hot flurry, banged her kitchen-door in their faces; but their visit this time was not to her.

Mr. Henry was at dinner. A snow-white cloth and napkin, and silver forks; everything of that sort nice, as befitted a gentleman's table; but the dinner itself consisted of potatoes, eaten with salt. A Dutch cheese was there; bread; and a small glass of milk. The intruding gentlemen stared at the fare, and Mr. Loftus's handsome nose went up with an air. Mr. Henry rose and stood before the table, courteous always; and Fullarton kicked out behind to keep out the throng.

"You were pacing the gravel walk at the back last night, Mr. Henry," began Loftus, so calmly that no human listener could have supposed it the advance trumpet-blast of war, "and saw two or three cigars overhead, I think?"

"Both saw them and smelt them," answered Mr. Henry with a smile.

"Exactly. Don't you think it was rather dishonourable of you to go and tell the English master of it this morning?"

"I did not do so."

"*We* think it was," continued Loftus, wholly disregarding the denial. "A gentleman could not be guilty of such an act. You have but just come among us, and in any case the matter was none of yours. Perhaps you will concern yourself in future with your own affairs, and not with ours. The first desk is not accustomed to this kind of thing."

Except for the stress laid upon the word "gentleman," there was nothing offensive in the cold tone: Loftus could not have descended to abuse. Mr. Henry looked surprised, rather bewildered.

"I should think you did not hear my denial, Loftus. I assure you I have not spoken of this."

"That's all," returned Loftus, going out with his tail, who had not seen cause to

interfere. Brown major, however, thought better of it, and turned back for a parting word.

"Such a nasty, sneaking thing to do, you know! You might have accused us openly to our faces; not have gone canting to the masters behind our backs."

Whatever Bertie Loftus's faults might be, he scorned a lie: and he fully believed the denial of the German master to be nothing less. So far as the smoking party knew, nobody else had been, or could have been, cognizant of the cigars; for Brown minor and his room had kept their own counsel.

"I knew he'd deny it," exclaimed Trace, when they got back, his light eyes flashing with a scorn not often seen there. "You now see what he is."

"I say, what d'ye think he's having for dinner?" burst out Fullarton. "Potatoes and salt."

"Potatoes and salt? Go along with you."

"Ask Loftus then; ask Brown. He had

got nothing else but a Dutch cheese; he was washing 'em down with milk."

"What else could be expected of one who'd go to lodge at Mother Butter's?" was the scornful remark of Savage. "He must be a cad!"

"And an owl," squeaked Lamb, venturing forward. "Owls go out prowling at night. Nobody else *could* have told."

Clearly. A master who dined on potatoes and salt, and eat his words with a lie when his villany was found out, was an owl, and all the rest of it.

Mr. Henry meanwhile was unconscious of the storm against him. He rather laughed over the matter, attaching no importance to it. His frugal dinner despatched, he was plodding on with his translation, when a little fellow, to whom he had promised some help in a tormenting French exercise, came in; and he was followed by George Paradyne, who often brought his Greek difficulties to Mr. Henry. George was a good classical scholar, but Mr. Henry was a better. Pa-

tiently he gave his best attention to both, putting his own work aside. He was always ready to help the boys out of hours, and encouraged them to come to him, though it was not in his line of duties.

Afternoon school began. A dull, weary afternoon, with inward dissatisfaction reigning. Mr. Henry called up the second desk, and found his pupils careless and troublesome, bordering on insubordination. He promised them punishment if they did not attend better. Master Dick Loftus especially was as scornfully insolent as he dared be. Not very long after they were sent back to their places, Dick lifted the lid of his desk, and fished up a rotten apple.

"Onions, see here. I've a great mind to shy it at him."

Onions glanced round the room; he enjoyed mischief as much as Dick, and was heartily hating and despising Mr. Henry: having nothing of the sneak in his own disposition, he could not tolerate it in others.

"You'll be seen, Dick. Old Jebb's eyes are rolling about."

"They always are, and be hanged to him, when Brabazon's away!" exclaimed Smart from the other side of Dick, as resentfully as if the rolling of the Reverend Mr. Jebb's eyes were a personal affront.

Presently the opportunity came; Dick raised the apple, carefully took aim, and sent it flying. Good aim, for it struck the cheek of Mr. Henry, making on it a great dash and splash, as it is in the nature of a rotten apple to do. But, unfortunately, at the very moment of Dick's giving an impetus to the missile, Mr. Henry happened to raise his eyes; he saw the deliberate aim, saw the throw, and Dick knew that he saw it. The whole room was aroused.

"Who did that?" cried out Mr. Baker, in a passion. "He shall have a good caning, whoever it was."

Nobody answered. The second desk especially, bending attentively over their books, looked up in innocent surprise.

"Who did it, I ask?" roared Mr. Baker, a choleric man, beginning to talk fast and furiously, and to cane his table as kindly as if it had been a boy's back. In the midst, in walked the Head Master. As he took his place the noise sunk to a calm.

"Did you see who flung the apple, Mr. Henry?" inquired the Master, when he was made cognizant of the cause of uproar he had come upon: and his quiet voice of authority presented a contrast to Mr. Baker's.

Involuntarily, as it were, and for a moment only, Mr. Henry's glance met Dick's. Something like shame for the act, something like a piteous appeal for silence, went out of Dick's eyes. It is so very different, you see —the accomplishing a little thing of this sort with impunity, and the being caught in the act. Mr. Henry, replying to the Head Master, said it might have been an accident, and finished wiping his face with his handkerchief. A nice mess the cambric was in.

"Accident or no accident, the boy shall be

punished if I can discover him," returned the doctor. "Can't you tell who flung it?"

Mr. Henry merely shook his head very slightly. It was of no consequence, he quietly said, and called up the third class for its German exercises. Dr. Brabazon, letting the matter drop, sat down and began turning the things over on his table in search of his lead-pencil. Not finding it, he took one from his pocket, and, in doing so, let it fall. It rolled along the floor, and one of the boys picked it up.

"Thank you, Jessop," said he, always pleasant with his pupils. "It would not do to lose this, would it?"

The pencil was of gold, with a beautiful diamond set in the top. It had been a present to him from some former pupils. The doctor began to make notes on an exercise.

"I say, Dick, what a blessing the German did not twig you," whispered Smart, speaking with his head bent over his Euripides as if he were steadily conning it.

"But he did," answered Dick.

"I'm sure he didn't. What nonsense! As if he'd not have got you into punishment if he had the chance!".

Dick, for a wonder, did not insist on his own opinion, and the afternoon went on. Dr. Brabazon's man-servant, Dean, appeared at the door and said a gentleman was waiting to see him, and the doctor left the hall. He only came back again just as the classes were rising.

Boys and masters poured out indiscriminately as usual. Mr. Henry walked away quickly, and the boys went into a state of frantic delight in the tea-room, ironically hoping he was washing his cheek.

But Dick Loftus had been struck with the amazing generosity displayed to him; for that Mr. Henry saw him fling the apple purposely, had been as plain to him as the sun at noonday; and he thought he owed some acknowledgment of the consideration shown. Dick Loftus was all impulse, and he forthwith went off on the gallop to Mother Butter's. Mr.

Henry was bending over his table working at the translation.

"I've come to say I'm sorry for what I did, and to thank you for not telling of me," began Dick, his face glowing rather more than usual.

"That's right," said Mr. Henry, his luminous eyes lighting up with a smile as he took Dick's hand and shook it.

"You saw me fling it, didn't you, sir?"

"Yes."

"Then why didn't you tell?"

"Because I did not wish you to be punished. I like to make people's lives pleasant to them; perhaps because I have had very little pleasure in my own."

"Would you never punish any of us?"

"I would if I saw you do essentially wrong. But for petty spite—retaliation—revenge—oh, Dick, don't you know Who it is that has warned us against these? I think we must all try for love and peace on earth if we would enter into it in heaven."

Dick considered: it was rather an unac-

customed way of putting matters. He began to work things out in his mind, speaking, as was usual with him, what came uppermost.

"I don't call it at all a heavenly thing to have gone behind their backs, and told about the seniors smoking," said he, practically. "I suppose you think smoking's one of the wrong things."

"It's not very right," replied Mr. Henry. "It injures themselves, and it is flying in the face of orders."

"But why did you not report them openly, instead of the——the other way?"

"I did not report them at all. I did not mention it to any one."

"Is that true?" asked Dick, dubiously.

"Boy! I should never tell you what was not true."

Dick stood puzzled. It was Mr. Henry's word against common sense; against the conviction of the whole school. Nothing would come of arguing the matter, even had Mr. Henry been disposed to argue it, and Dick

turned to leave, saying something in a complaining tone about having to get to his lessons in play hours.

"Do you find them difficult?" asked Mr. Henry.

"Difficult?" returned Dick, as if the question were an aggravation. "It's that horrid Euclid. Nothing ever bothers me as that does."

"Bring it to me; I daresay I can smooth your mountains for you by a little explanation."

"Do you mean it?" cried Dick, a spring of gratitude in his voice. "But it is not in your work. You have nothing to do with Euclid."

"Never mind that. Fetch it now."

Dick flew for his books. Mr. Henry did smooth the mountains, patiently, kindly; and he bade him always come to him in the same stumbling-blocks—every evening if he liked. Mrs. Butter made her appearance once, which Dick regarded as an agreeable interlude, for it enabled him to ask affectionately after the

shorn cock and the other animals, to the lady's great wrath. She had a pair of new boots in her hand for Mr. Henry; the man, she said, was waiting for the money. Mr. Henry replied that it was not convenient to pay him then; he would send it in a day or two.

Dick, his Euclid difficulty over, went home; and in giving an account to his friends of various matters, mentioned this episode of the new boots and the non-payment—not in ill-nature, but in his propensity to gossip. Trace was contemptuous over it.

"I'll lay a guinea the fellow has not a shilling in the world!"

"But look here," cried Dick. "I don't really think it was he that told about the smoke. He says he didn't: he's as earnest as he can be."

"That's all your opinion's good for," returned Trace. And the rest gave a slighting laugh at Dick. Dick took his revenge in a most impudent whistle.

The boys were subsequently in the hall at

their evening lessons. Lamb, who had contrived to do his quickly, was stealing out to pass the intervening half-hour before prayer-time in his bedroom, which was against rules. In passing the mathematical room, he encountered Mr. Long. Glancing around to see that no one else was within hearing, Mr. Long accosted him in a semi-under-tone.

"By the way, Lamb—there was no mistake I suppose in regard to that matter you mentioned to me? The seniors *were* smoking?"

"No mistake at all, sir. Five or six cigars were alight, and the room was full of smoke."

"They are making a terrible fuss over it—just as though it were not true."

"It was quite true, sir. My only motive in reporting it to you was their own good: I did not want to get them into a row. It *is* a pernicious habit."

"Ah," returned Mr. Long, peering rather dubiously through his spectacles on his virtuous friend. For he really did not approve

of sneaks as a whole, but there always seemed some excuse for listening to this one. What with his near sight, and what with his absent brain, buried in its calculations and sciences, Mr. Long was reproachfully self-conscious that he did not look out for peccadilloes as he ought. "That's all then, Lamb."

Mr. Long turned towards the hall; Lamb towards the library, as if he wanted to borrow a book. But as soon as the master's footsteps had died away, the young gentleman altered his course, and stole gingerly up the stairs.

After Dick Loftus had left with his mathematical books, Mr. Henry got to his translation, and wrote on by candle-light, how long he hardly knew. His head, which had been aching all the evening, grew worse, and he suddenly bethought himself to take a mouthful of fresh air. The heavy atmosphere was so different from what he was accustomed to in Germany, that he sometimes felt three parts stifled. Putting on his

trencher, he strolled across the gymnasium ground, damp this evening, to the broad gravel walk before mentioned, leading past the study and the rest of the back windows of the college. Barely had he begun to pace the path, when he encountered a strange man, much to his surprise; for the place was private. Mr. Henry accosted him.

"Are you in search of any one?"

"I have a letter for Dr. Brabazon. I can't find any entrance to the house. This is Orville College, isn't it?"

The words were spoken roughly and impatiently; the tones seemed to be those of an educated man. Mr. Henry tried to get a distinct view of his face, but the speaker turned his back, and appeared to be looking for some entrance to the college.

"You must go round to the front," said Mr. Henry. "The entrances are all on that side."

Without a word of thanks, the stranger went off down the path, looking here and there like one uncertain of his road; but he

took the right turning, round by the chapel. Mr. Henry, who had watched him, continued his way to the top of the gravel-walk—he, and his tired brow.

As he was passing underneath the bedrooms in returning, a piece of newspaper, seemingly as large as a whole *Times*, and crumpled into a sort of ball, came down upon his cap.

"Who's that?" he called out, thinking it might have been done to attract his attention. The question brought forth a boy's head from one of the upper windows, and a faint light that was burning in the room suddenly went out.

"Did you throw that down for any purpose?" asked Mr. Henry.

"No, sir. Did it touch you? I beg your pardon. It was only a piece of old newspaper I threw away."

The head went in again. Mr. Henry had not discerned to whom it belonged, and did not care to know. He began to cross slowly back towards home; he could not afford

to waste more time, but must get to his work again.

"It was that beast of a German!"

The words came from Mr. Lamb—for his head, it was, which had been thrust forth in answer to Mr. Henry. Lamb had gained the bedroom unmolested—you saw him on his way to it—and the first thing he did, after bolting the door, was to light a private taper. He had brought a huge cake to school, with sundry other luxuries, and had been enjoying them systematically, so much each day, as he could get solitary opportunity. The last slice of the cake only remained to be eaten. He gobbled it in rather quickly, licked up the crumbs remaining in the paper, made a ball of that, and flung it out just as Mr. Henry chanced to be passing. When the latter called out, Lamb extinguished the candle with his finger and thumb, and then looked out to answer.

"It's that beast of a German!"

But Mr. Lamb need not have called names. He watched Mr. Henry crossing towards his

home, and gave him time to get indoors. It wanted still some twenty minutes to the hour for chapel, and he relighted his taper. Diving into the bottom of his box, he brought forth a favourite book for a little wholesome recreation, and also a choice cigarette, which he lighted. Down he sat on the next box, low, square, and convenient; puffing comfortably away, and improving his mind with the solacing pages of "Jack Sheppard."

CHAPTER VIII.

A LOSS.

THE next morning was distinguished by an event that brought pleasure to all. Talbot was amongst them again. He was looking fresh and well; did not limp in the least; and seemed to have grown an inch and a half. Mr. Baker directed him to take his place at the first desk, and this was a surprise to its occupants: but they welcomed him gladly.

"Did you know you were going to be moved here, Shrewsbury?" asked they.

"Not for certain. I thought it likely."

"You are going in for the Orville?"

"Of course I am. I should have done that had they kept me at the second desk. I say, has it never come out who shot me?"

The boys shook their heads. It was a sore subject with them yet.

"I heard that Sir Simon offered a gold watch as a reward."

"So he did. But nothing turned up. Never mind, earl."

"*I* don't mind; why should I?" returned the earl. "No harm has come of it. I say, though, you can't think how kind the doctor and Miss Brabazon have been. If I were old enough I'd marry her."

This caused a laugh. The earl had the queerest way of bringing out things, keeping his own countenance as steady as could be all the while.

Dr. Orville, the founder of the college, had bestowed on it an exhibition at his death. It fell in at the end of every third year; and for three years gave seventy pounds a year to the boy who got it. It was open for com-

petition to all unconditionally, no matter whether they were seniors or not; though of course none but seniors were sufficiently advanced to try for it; and the name of each competitor must lie on the books, *as* competitor, for one year previous to the trial. The boys called it familiarly the Orville Prize; in short, the Orville. The names had been just put down, several, for the probationary twelvemonth was on the eve of being entered; and, to the unspeakable indignation of the school, George Paradyne's was one. A new boy (leaving other things that some two or three of them knew of out of the question) who had but just come in, to thrust down his name indecently amidst the old pupils! This was said from mouth to mouth; and Trace had a sore battle with himself not to disclose the disgrace of the past.

The Head Master came into the hall and called up Talbot. The boy had been at home for a week or two, and only returned that morning.

"Are you feeling strong, my lad?"

"Quite so, thank you, sir. I have been to the sea-side."

"Have you!" returned the Master, some surprise in his tone, for he knew how limited funds were at Talbot's home.

"Sir Simon Orville came to see my mother the day after I got home; he insisted that she should take me to the sea-side," said Talbot with a smile, as if he had divined those thoughts. The doctor understood the rest in a moment.

"I'm proud of Sir Simon; I'm proud to call him a friend," cried he, warmly. "I am glad you've been."

"If you please, sir, I wish my name to be entered for the Orville Exhibition," Talbot stayed to say.

"Do you? Very well. How old are you?"

"Close upon seventeen."

"All right. I don't care how many of you enter. Only one can gain it; but it will get the rest on in their studies. I'll just make a note of your name in pencil now."

He looked for his lead-pencil, and could not see it. Then, remembering that he had missed it the previous day, he put his hand in his pocket for the gold one. But it was not there.

"Why, what have I done with it?" cried the doctor, searching about. "Perhaps I took it into my study and left it there. Very careless of me! Go and see, Talbot: it will be on the table in the large inkstand."

Talbot went and came back without it. "It's not there, sir. This is the only one I could see," handing an old silver one.

"Not there!" Dr. Brabazon sent his thoughts backwards, trying to recollect when he last used it. The fact of the pencil's falling in the schoolroom the previous afternoon occurred to him, and he remembered that he was making pencil marks on a book with it when his man-servant came to call him out. What did he do with the pencil? Did he leave it on his table; or put it in his pocket; or carry it away in his hand? He could not tell. Here, it certainly was not at

present; and the Head Master rose and went to his study himself. When called out of school the previous afternoon he had sat there for some time with the visitor, a gentleman named Townshend, who had come on business. Subsequently, he and Miss Brabazon had gone out to dinner: and, in short, his memory showed no trace of the pencil since he was using it in the hall. He could not find it in the study, and went to the sitting-room, interrupting his young daughter; who had quitted her French exercise to drop airy curtseys before the glass.

"Rose, have you seen my gold pencil?"

"Oh, papa," said Rose, demurely, making believe to be stooping down to tie her shoe. "Pencil-case! No, I've not seen it. Why, papa, you are always losing your things."

A just charge, Miss Rose. The doctor, an absent man, often did mislay articles.

"But they are always found again, papa, you know. As this will be."

However nothing seemed so certain about

it this time. The search for the pencil went on; and went on in vain. Quite a commotion arose in the house, especially in the hall, where the search was greatest.

"It could not go without hands," said the doctor, after turning everything out of his desk-table. "If I had let it fall in getting up when I was called out yesterday, some of you would have heard it."

One of the boys, and only one, affirmed that he saw the doctor with it in his hand as he left the hall. This was Trace: and there were few things Trace did not see with those drawn-together eyes of his. Dr. Brabazon believed Trace was mistaken. If he had carried the pencil away in his hand, he thought he should not fail to remember it; besides, others of them would surely have noticed it. Trace persisted: he said he saw the diamond gleam.

Well, the pencil was gone. Gone! Dr. Brabazon looked out on the sea of faces, curious ideas hovering around his mind. He did not admit them; he would not have

accused any of the boys for the world; no, nor suspected them. But it was very strange.

The boys thought it so. First Talbot was shot, and now a diamond pencil (as they phrased it) was stolen. Had they got a black sheep amongst them? If so, who was it?

But in a day or two Trace's assertion proved to be correct. Dr. Brabazon saw Mr. Townshend, the friend who had called upon him, and this gentleman said he had observed a gold pencil in the doctor's hand when he came into the study that day; and he, the doctor, had put it into the large inkstand on the table, as he shook hands with him. This news, if anything, complicated the affair; but it appeared entirely to exonerate the boys, had exoneration been required. It also drew it into a smaller nutshell: and the hypothesis to arise now was, that some one had come in by the glass window and taken it. Dean, the doctor's private servant, a faithful man who had lived with him for

many years, avowed freely that it was unusually late when he went in that night to close the shutters. He found the glass door on what he called "the catch;" that is, pushed close to, but not shut; which was nothing unusual. On the following morning the doctor was in his study by six o'clock, and opened the shutters himself, his frequent custom. That the pencil was certainly not in the inkstand then, the doctor felt sure.

"I say, Trace, do you think the German would take the pencil?"

It was Lamb who put this question. Morning school was over, and the boys were in the quadrangle, discussing the loss and other matters. Trace looked up quickly.

"Why do you ask it?"

"Because he was prowling about before the study window the night of the loss—just as he had been the other night when that stupid tale about the smoking got about. I went up to our bedroom: I like to get a few minutes' quiet for reflection sometimes—it improves the mind," continued candid Lamb;

"and in chucking a piece of newspaper out of the window, it happened to touch his head. He called out, and that's how I knew he was there."

Trace drew in his breath: a grave suspicion was taking possession of him. The eager boys, a choice knot of them, had gathered round.

"Nobody's ever there at night, no stranger, as Dr. Brabazon said this morning," observed Trace. "It looks queer."

"You think the German went in and helped himself to the pencil, Trace?"

"Be quiet, Onions; you are always so outspoken. I'd rather not 'think' about it on my own score," was Trace's cautious answer.

"Upon my word and honour, I think it must have been the fellow!" cried Lamb, vehemently; and for once in his life Mr. Lamb spoke according to his conviction. "It stands to reason: who else was likely to be there?"

"I don't say he took it, mind," resumed

Trace; "but of all, belonging to the college —masters, boys, servants, take the lot—the German is the one who seems most in need of money. One may say *that* much without treason. Look at his engaging Mother Butter's cheap lodgings! and living on potatoes and such things!"

"The other day he was dining off a suet-pudding: he ate it with salt," interrupted Fullarton's eager voice.

"How fond he must be of salt!" exclaimed Savage. And the boys laughed.

"He's working at some translation like old Blazes—sits up at night to do it," resumed Powell. "He told Loftus minor it was for a bookseller, who was to give him thirty pounds for it. He'd not work in that way if he didn't need money awfully."

"But where does his money go? His salary—what does he do with it?" wondered the boys.

"He must have private expenses," said Trace.

"What expenses?"

This was a question. They had once had an usher who indulged himself in horse exercise; they had had another who gave forty-five pounds for a violin, and half ruined himself buying new music. Mr. Henry did neither.

"Perhaps he has got a wife and family," hazarded Brown major, impulsively.

The notion of Mr. Henry's having a wife and family was so rich, that the boys laughed till their sides ached. Which rather offended Brown major.

"I'm sure I've heard those foreign French fellows often marry at twenty-one; Germans too," quoth he. "You needn't grin. When a man's got a wife and family, he has to keep 'em. His money must go somewhere. Dick Loftus saw some new boots come home for him the other day, and he couldn't pay for them. What are you staring at, Trace?"

Trace was not staring at Brown major or any one else in particular. The mention of the boots called up a train of ideas that half startled him. This incident of the boots had

occurred on the very evening of the loss; the following day (when they were in the midst of searching for the pencil) Mr. Henry had gone by train into London after morning school, and was not back until three o'clock. Soon after he returned, Trace, by the merest accident, saw him take out his purse, and there were several sovereigns in it. The thing, to Trace's mind, seemed to be getting unpleasantly clear. But he said nothing.

"What are you all doing here?" exclaimed Gall, coming up at this juncture. "Holding a council?"

They told him in an undertone: that the German master had been pacing about before the study-window the night the pencil must have been lost out of the room; and they spoke of his hard work, his want of money, of all the rest they had been saying and hinting at.

Gall stopped the grave hint in its bud. The suspicion was perfectly absurd as regarded Mr. Henry; most unjustifiable, he

assured them; and they had better get rid of it at once.

It was rather a damper, and in the check to their spirits, they began to disperse. Gall had a great deal of good plain common sense; and his opinion was always listened to. Trace rose from the projecting base of a pillar on which he had been seated, knees to nose, put his arm within Gall's and drew him away.

He told him everything; adding this fact of seeing the money in Mr. Henry's purse, which he had not disclosed to the rest. Gall would not be convinced. It might look a little suspicious, he acknowledged, but he felt sure Mr. Henry was not one to do such a thing: he'd not dare to do it. Besides, think of his high character, as given to the Head Master from the university of Heidelberg.

Trace maintained his own opinion. He thought there were ways and means of getting those high characters furnished, when people had a need for them; he said

he had mistrusted the man from the first moment he saw him. "Look at his peaching about the smoking! Look at the mean way he lives, the food he eats!" continued Trace, impressively. "He must have private expenses of some sort; or else what makes him so poor?"

"He may have left debts behind him in Germany," suggested Gall, after a pause of reflection.

"And most likely has," was the scornful rejoinder. "But he'd not make his dinner off potatoes and work himself into a skeleton, to pay back debts in Germany. Rubbish, Gall!"

"Look here, Trace. I know nothing of Mr. Henry's private affairs; they may be bad or good for aught I can tell; but if I were you, I'd get rid of that suspicion as to the pencil-case. Rely upon it," concluded Gall, emphatically, "it won't hold water. Put it away from you."

Good advice, no doubt; and Trace, cautious always, intended to take it. It hap-

pened, however, that same afternoon, that the Head Master sent him to his study for a book. Trace opened the door quickly, and there saw Miss Brabazon, on her hands and knees, searching round the edge of the carpet. She sprang to her feet with a scared look.

"A pencil-case will roll into all sorts of odd places," she observed, as if in apology. "I cannot understand the loss; it is troubling me more than I can express."

"It must have been lost through the window, Miss Brabazon," said Trace. "That is, some one must have got in that way."

"Yes; unless it rolled down and is hiding itself," she answered, her eyes glancing restlessly into every corner. "I think I shall have the carpet taken up to-morrow. It will be a great trouble, with all this fixed furniture."

"I don't think you need have it done," observed Trace, who was standing with his back to her before the large bookcase. "I fancy it went out through the window."

"You have some suspicion, Trace!" she quickly exclaimed. "What is it?"

"If I have, Miss Brabazon, it is one that I cannot mention. It may be a wrong suspicion, you see; perhaps it is."

"Trace," she said, laying her hand upon his arm, and her voice, her eyes were full of strange earnestness, "you must tell it me. Tell me in confidence; I have a suspicion too; perhaps we may keep the secret together. I would give the pencil and its value twice over to find it behind the carpet, in some crack or crevice of the wainscoting—and I *know* it is not there."

She spoke with some passion. The words, the manner altogether, disarmed Trace of his caution; and he breathed his doubts into her ear. They were received with intense surprise.

"Mr. Henry! that kind, gentlemanly German master! Why, Trace, you must be dreaming."

Trace thought himself an idiot. "To tell you the truth, Miss Brabazon, I fancied you

were suspecting him yourself, though I don't know why I took up the notion," he resumed, in his mortification. "But for that, I should not have mentioned it. I won't eat my words, though, as I have spoken; I do believe him to be guilty."

"I cannot think it; he seems as honest as the day. Just go over your grounds of suspicion again, Trace. I was too much surprised to listen properly."

Trace did so; the huge book he had come for standing upright in his arm, supported by his shoulder. He mentioned everything; from Lamb having seen Mr. Henry before the study that night, down to the empty purse filled suddenly with gold.

Did you ever happen to witness a knot of boys favoured personally with an unexpected explosion of gunpowder on the fifth of November? I'm sure they did not leap apart in a more startled manner than did Trace and Miss Brabazon now, at the entrance of Mr. Henry. He had come to see after Trace and the book; the Head Master thought

Trace must be unable to find it. Away went Trace. Miss Brabazon stooped to put down the corner of the hearth-rug, saying something rather confusedly about searching for the pencil, now that it was known to have been lost in that room.

It happened that Mr. Henry, an outdoor master, had not heard that that fact was established. Miss Brabazon told him of it.

"Some one must have got in through the unfastened window, and taken it," she continued, looking at him. "It is very curious. Strangers are never there: the grounds are private."

"Got in through the window," he repeated, as a recollection flashed across his mind. "Why, I saw a man on the gravel-path; there," pointing to the one on which the window opened, "that same night. He was looking for the entrance to the college, and I directed him round to the front."

"How came you to see him?" she returned, speaking rather sharply.

"I had been hard at work at my translation, the one I told the doctor of, and strolled across for a breath of fresh air. This man was coming down the path, must have just passed the window, and I asked him what he wanted. He replied that he had a letter for Dr. Brabazon."

"Why did you not speak of this before, Mr. Henry?"

"I never thought to connect it with the loss. It was believed that the pencil was lost from the hall. The man did not seem in the least confused or hurried. I should fancy his business was quite legitimate, Miss Brabazon; merely the delivery of the letter. I saw one in his hand."

She went at once to question the servants, debating in her mind whether this was fact, or an invention of the German master's to throw suspicion from himself. Not any tidings could she get of a letter having been brought by hand that night. Dean was positive that no such letter had been delivered: one came the previous night, he said,

for Mr. Baker, and he took it to him. Miss Brabazon went back to the study, and asked Mr. Henry, waiting there by her desire, whether he had not made a mistake in the night.

"None whatever," was his reply. "I had received a letter from Heidelberg that day, enclosing an order for a little money due to me, and when I met this man I was considering how I could shape my duties on the following one, so as to have time to go to London and get it cashed."

"And did you go?"

"Yes, as soon as morning school was over. I told the doctor what my errand was. When I left, they were searching the hall for the pencil."

This, if true, disposed of one part of Mr. Trace's suspicions. Miss Brabazon thought how candid and upright he looked as he stood there talking to her. "Should you know the man again, Mr. Henry?" she suddenly asked.

"I might know his voice: I did not see

much of his face. A youngish man; thirty, or rather more. I thought he walked a little lame."

Miss Brabazon lifted her head with more quickness than the information seemed to warrant. "Lame! *Lame?*"

"It struck me so."

She said no more. She sat looking out straight before her with a sort of bewildered stare. Mr. Henry left her to return to the hall; but she sat on, staring still and seeing nothing.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

SOME weeks elapsed. Things had blown over, and the Christmas holidays were coming on. Wonders and calamities; and, in some degree, suspicions; yield to the soothing hand of time. Talbot's accident was almost forgotten; the lost pencil (never found) was not thought of so much as it had been, and the gossip respecting it had ceased.

The bitterness had not lessened against George Paradyne. Gall could not fathom its source. There was no cause for it, as far as he knew, except that the boy had been placed at once at the first desk, and had entered his name for the Orville prize; both

of which facts were highly presumptuous in a new scholar, and an outsider. It was also known that he was in the habit of flying to Mrs. Butter's house for help in his studies: the boys supposed that the German (as they derisively called Mr. Henry) was paid for giving it: and many an ill-natured sneer was levelled at them both.

"Are you going to coach Paradyne through the holidays?" asked Trace of Mr. Henry, condescending to address him for once in a way: and be it remarked that when Trace so far unbended, he did not forget his usual civility. But Mr. Henry always detected the inward feeling.

"Trace," he said, every tone betraying earnest kindness, "you spend the holidays at Sir Simon's, therefore I shall be within reach. Come to me, and let me read with you: I know you are anxious to get the Orville. Come every day; I will do my very best to push you on."

"You are a finished scholar?" observed Trace, cynically.

"As finished as any master in the college. When a young man knows (as I did) that he has nothing else to trust to, he is wise to make use of his opportunities. I believe also that I have a peculiar aptitude for teaching. Come and try me."

"What would be your terms?"

"Nothing. I would do it for"—he laughed as he spoke—"love. Oh, Trace, I wish you would let me help you! I wish I could get you to believe that it would be one pleasure in my lonely life."

"What a hypocrite!" thought Trace: "I wonder what he's saying it for? Thank you," he rejoined aloud, with distant coldness; "I shall not require your assistance." And so the offer terminated; and Trace, speaking of it to Loftus, said it was like the fellow's impudence to make it.

One thing had been particularly noticeable throughout the term—that the young German usher seemed to have a facility for healing breaches. In ill-feelings, in quarrellings, in fightings, so sure was he to step in, and not

only stop the angry tongues, but soothe their owners down to calmness. Rage, in his hands, became peace; mountains of evil melted down to molehills; fierce recrimination gave place to hand-shaking. He did all so quietly, so pleasantly, so patiently! and, but for the under-current of feeling against him that was being always secretly fanned, he would have been an immense favourite. Putting aside the untoward events at its commencement, the term had been one of the most satisfactory on record.

Loftus and his brother, Trace, James Talbot, and Irby were spending the holidays at Pond Place. Sir Simon Orville generally had two of the boys, besides his nephews. They had wanted Irby and Leek this time; but Sir Simon chose to invite Talbot, and gave them their choice of the other two. And it happened that Sir Simon, the day after their arrival, overheard Trace and Loftus talking of sundry matters, and became cognisant of the offer made to Trace by Mr. Henry.

"And you didn't accept it, Raymond?" he asked, plunging suddenly upon the two in his flowery dressing-gown. "If I were going in for the Orville competition, I shouldn't have sneezed at it. This comes of your pride: you won't study with Paradyne."

"No, it does not, uncle," replied Trace; "though I should object to study with Paradyne. It comes of my dislike to Mr. Henry."

"What is there to dislike in Mr. Henry?"

Trace hesitated, making no direct reply. Bertie Loftus moved away. Sir Simon pressed his question.

Wisely or unwisely, Trace, in his ill-nature, forgot his ordinary caution, his long-continued silence, and disclosed the suspicions attaching to Mr. Henry in regard to the lost pencil. It was so delightful a temptation to speak against him! Loftus came back during the recital, and curled his lip in silent condemnation of Trace.

"Look here," said Sir Simon, wrathfully, "I'd rather suspect one of you."

Loftus went away again without making any answer. Trace smiled very grandly compassionate.

"You were always suspicious, Trace," continued Sir Simon; "it's in your nature to be so, as it was in your poor mother's. He's a kindly, honest gentleman, so far as I've seen of him. Steal a pencil, indeed! Who rose the report? You?"

"There has not been any report," said Trace, with composure. "Lamb saw him before the study window that night, and we wondered whether he had come in and taken it. The doubt was hushed up, and has died away." "Not hushed up as far as you go, it seems. Raymond, I'd——"

Talbot and Dick Loftus came running in, and Sir Simon changed the private bearings of the subject, for the more open one of Raymond's pride, as he called it, in not accepting Mr. Henry's offer.

"Giving him two hours a day in the holidays!" exclaimed Talbot. "I wish it had been made to me!"

"You do!" cried Sir Simon. "I suppose you hope to get the prize yourself?"

"I shall try my best for it, sir," said the boy, laughing, "Seventy pounds a year for three years! It would take me to Oxford; and there's no other chance of my getting there."

Holidays for everybody but poor Mr. Henry! He was slaving on. He took George Paradyne for two hours a day; he took another boy, one of the outsiders, who was poor, friendless, and very backward; receiving nothing for either; he gave Miss Rose Brabazon her daily lessons, French one day, German the next, alternately; he went to Mrs. Gall's, to drill three of her little boys, not out at school yet, in Latin and Greek; and he worked hard at his translation, Which translation was a very difficult one to get on quickly with, necessitating continual references to abstruse works; for Mr. Henry discovered numerous errors in the original, and desired, in his

conscientiousness, to set them right in the English version.

He was at home one morning, a few days after the holidays began, buried in his translation books, marking the faults in Miss Rose Brabazon's last French dictation—and he believed nobody else could have made so many—when Sir Simon Orville walked in. The sweet, kind, patient expression in Mr. Henry's face had always struck him: very patient and wearied did it look to-day. It was Christmas Eve.

"Hard at work? But this is holiday time, Mr. Henry."

Mr. Henry smiled and brightened up. "Some of us don't get the chance of any holiday, Sir Simon," he cheerfully said, as if it were a good joke.

"Bad, that! All work and no play, you know—but I'd better not enlarge on that axiom," broke off Sir Simon, "since my errand here is to give you more work. Of the boys whose names are down for the Orville, one comes to you daily, I hear."

"Yes; Paradyne," replied Mr. Henry, feeling rather sensitive at mentioning the name which must be so unwelcome to the brother of the late Mrs. Trace.

"Ay, Paradyne. You made an offer to my nephew, Raymond Trace, to take him also for the holidays, I hear. And he declined."

"I should have been so glad to be of service to him!" returned Mr. Henry, his eyes lighting with the earnestness of the wish.

"The prejudiced young jackass!" explosively cried Sir Simon. "Well, the loss is his. But now, I want you to make the same offer to another, one who won't refuse it; and that's Talbot—Lord Shrewsbury, as they call him. He's staying with me—you know it, perhaps—and he can come to you daily. The boy has only his education to look to in life; he does not possess a golden horde laid up in lavender to make ducks and drakes of when he comes of age, as some of the rascals do; and through those other two bright nephews of mine his studies were

stopped for some four or five weeks. Will you take him?"

"Yes, and gladly, Sir Simon. He—perhaps"—Mr. Henry paused and hesitated—"will have no objection to study with young Paradyne?"

"He'd better not let me hear of it, if he has," retorted Sir Simon. "Why should he? Paradyne and his people have not hurt *him*. No, no; Talbot's another sort of fellow to that. And now, what shall we say about terms? Don't be afraid of laying it on, Mr. Henry; it's my treat."

"I could not charge," said Mr. Henry, interrupting the cheering laugh. "Excuse me, Sir Simon; but I am not helping the boys for money. It would scarcely be an honourable thing. I am well paid by Dr. Brabazon; and any little assistance I can give them out of school is only their due."

"But you are not paid to teach them Latin and Greek and mathematics. You have the right to make the most of your holidays."

"I scarcely see that I have, so far as the college pupils are concerned. Let Talbot come to me at once, Sir Simon; but please say no more about payment. Robbing me of my time? No, indeed, not of a minute, if he comes with Paradyne: their studies are the same. As to any little trouble of my own, I would not think of accepting money for that. I am too glad to give it."

Sir Simon nodded approvingly; he liked the generosity of the feeling; and shook Mr. Henry's hand heartily as he went out.

"The cocked-up young Pharisee!" he soliloquized, apostrophizing the unconscious Trace, and dashing an enormous gig umbrella, that he had brought as a walking-stick, into the ground. "If ever there was an honest, honourable, good spirit, it's his I have just left. Mr. Trace and his uncharitable suspicions will get taken down some day, as sure as he is living."

Turning into the college, he went straight on to the sitting-room, where Miss Brabazon was, to all appearance, alone. Rose was

behind the curtain at the far end of the room, ostensibly learning her German, for Mr. Henry would be due in ten minutes; really buried in a charming fairy-tale book, lent to her by Jessie Gall. And her sister had forgotten she was there.

"What is it that these rascally boys have picked up against that poor young German master?" began Sir Simon, in his impulsive fashion. "Do you know, Miss Emma?"

Emma Brabazon laid down the pretty baskets of flowers she was arranging for the evening; for her married brothers and sisters and their children were coming that day on their usual Christmas sojourn. But she did not answer.

"Trace has been talking to me about the lost pencil," resumed Sir Simon. "But *surely* it is a slander to suspect him of having taken it. Miss Emma, I'd lay my life he is as honest as I am; and he's a vast deal more of a gentleman."

"It was very foolish of Trace to speak of

it," she said. "Pray forget it, Sir Simon. The thing has dropped."

"But did you suspect him? You must forgive me, my dear, for asking you these questions; I intended to ask Dr. Brabazon, not you, but I find he is out."

"And I am very glad he is, Sir Simon, for I have never told papa. There were circumstances that seemed to throw a suspicion on Mr. Henry at the time, but they were so doubtful that it was best not to speak of them; and I desired Trace—who was the one to bring them under my notice—to let them die away."

"Oh, Trace brought them to you, did he? But how do you mean they were doubtful?"

"In so far as that Mr. Henry, if applied to, might have been able to explain them all away. It would have been very cruel to bring accusation against any one on grounds so slight."

"Just so. Well, my dear lady, I'd stake Pond Place against Mr. Raymond Trace's prejudices, that the young man is as upright

as he is—perhaps more so. We poor sinners shan't be able to stand in Master Trace's presence with our hats on soon; he must be going on for heaven head-foremost, he must, with all this self-righteousness."

Emma Brabazon laughed, and followed Sir Simon out, talking. Upon which Miss Rose emerged from her hiding-place to escape, her German book in her hand, and the fairy tale stuffed up her frock.

"What did they mean?" debated the young lady, who had but imperfectly understood. "If I could find out, I'd tell him. He is always kind to me with my German, though I am so tiresome. I hate that Trace: he never gives me anything; and he stole one of my letters out of Dick's drawer the other day, and made game of it."

People called Sir Simon Orville an odd man. Mr. Raymond Trace in particular could not understand him; there were moments when that young gentleman deemed his respected uncle fit only for a lunatic asylum. He had surely thought him so this

morning, had he been behind him. For Sir Simon, quitting Dr. Brabazon's, went on direct to Mrs. Paradyne's. It was not the first visit he had paid her in her present residence. Deprecating, as he did, the past frauds and crimes of which her husband was guilty, he yet in his benevolent heart thought the poor widow as much deserving of commiseration as were his own relatives; and he chose to show her that he thought it. His errand was to invite her and George to dinner on the next day, Christmas; that day of peace and goodwill to men. Mrs. Paradyne at first declined; but Sir Simon was so heartily pressing, there was no withstanding it, and she at length yielded. He went home, chuckling at the surprise it would be to his nephews, for they knew nothing of it, and he did not intend to tell them.

A surprise it proved. They went for a very long walk after morning service on the following day, and had not been home many minutes when the guests arrived. Trace stared with all his eyes: he thought he must

be dreaming. *Was* that Mrs. Paradyne, coming into the room on the arm of Sir Simon, or were his eyes deceiving him? He might be wrong: he had not seen her indoors for many years. She wore a handsome silk gown, and a cap of real lace; rather reserved and discontented in her manner, but essentially a lady. George followed her in, and there could be doubt no longer. George was free, merry, open, cordial, as it was in George Paradyne's nature to be, and he went up to Trace with his hand outstretched, wishing him heartily a merry Christmas. Trace turned salmon-coloured: he would not see the hand; did not respond to it. Bertie Loftus, as if to cover the marked rudeness, put his hand cordially into George Paradyne's; and Trace would have annihilated Bertie, could looks have done it.

"Is he mad?" groaned Trace in a side-whisper, alluding to his uncle.

Bertie laughed. "Let us drop old grievances for once, Ray. It's Christmas Day."

"If my mother—who died here—could but rise from her grave and see this!" retorted Trace. He went and stood at the window, looking out, his bosom beating with its wrongs.

Dick leaped three feet into the air when he came in and saw the guests. The more the merrier, was Dick's creed. It was that of Talbot and Irby. And now that they met George Paradyne on equal grounds, away from the prejudices of the school, they all saw how much there was to admire and like in him—Trace excepted. Had George Paradyne suddenly cast his shell as a chrysalis does, and appeared before them an angel, Trace, in his condemning prejudice, would have turned his back upon him. It crossed Trace's mind to refuse to sit down to table. But he feared Sir Simon: it would not do to offend *him*.

It was at the dessert, when the banquet was nearing its close and Mrs. Paradyne had drawn on her gloves, that Sir Simon told Talbot he was to go and read daily with

Paradyne at Mr. Henry's. Mr. Henry's kind offer, he called it; and he spoke a few emphatic words of praise of the hardworking usher. Apparently the theme was not palatable to Mrs. Paradyne. She folded her gloved hands one over the other, said a word or two in slighting disparagement of Mr. Henry, and then resolutely closed her lips. Evidently she had not yet forgiven the mistake which had brought them to Orville. George, as if reading her thoughts and struck with their injustice, glanced reproachfully at her as he turned to Sir Simon.

"Mr. Henry is very kind to me," said the boy: "he is kind to us all. Nobody knows how good he is. He must be very lonely to-day. He was to have dined with us."

Sir Simon gave a start. "I *wish* I had asked him here! The thoughtless savage I was! No more right feeling about me than if I'd never heard of Christmas. I might as well have been born a Red Indian."

Mr. Henry was at home, eating his dinner alone. Not potatoes or suet-pudding to-day:

he had learned to keep Christmas in Germany, and was lavish in its honour. As George—a great deal too open-speaking to please his mother—said, he had been invited to Mrs. Paradyne's, but when she arranged to go to Sir Simon's she sent an apology to Mr. Henry. Mrs. Butter cooked him a fowl and made him a jam-pudding. He went to church in the morning and stayed for the after-service. As he sat over the fire after dinner, in the twilight of the evening, he could not help feeling as if he were alone in the world—that there was nobody to care for him. At the best, his life, in its social aspect, was not a very happy one. He had a great deal of care always upon him, and he saw no chance of its ever being removed; but he was learning to live for a better world than this.

Miss Rose Brabazon had let her tongue run riot the previous day, telling him something confidentially—he could not make out what. Rose's own ideas were obscure upon the point, therefore it was too much to expect they would be clear to him. The young lady

thought that "Trace and Emma and 'some of them' feared he might have been capable of taking papa's diamond pencil-case, just as much as the real thief who came in at the glass doors and stole it." It had startled Mr. Henry beyond measure; *startled* him, and thrown him into a mass of perplexity. The impression conveyed to him was, not that he was suspected of taking the pencil, but, that he might be capable of taking one. What reason could they have for believing him capable of such a thing?

Later in the evening he strolled out in the cold starlight air. He felt so very lonely, so isolated from all the world, that only to look at the gay windows of other people was company. Every house, poor and rich, seemed to be holding its Christmas party. Quite a flood of light streamed from Mr. Gall's—from Dr. Brabazon's; all but himself were keeping Christmas. There was neither envy nor rebellion in his heart. His only thought was, "If they knew I was here alone, they would invite me in." He pictured the inside glad-

ness, and rejoiced in it as though it were his own. "Peace on earth, and goodwill to men!" he murmured gratefully over and over again.

The muslin curtains were before the dining-room windows at Dr. Brabazon's, but not the shutters. It was a large party—all the children and grandchildren. A smile crossed Mr. Henry's lips as he thought of Miss Rose in her element. Save the admiration of the college boys, there was nothing that young damsel liked so much as company. Mr. Henry halted and looked across the lawn, and by so doing apparently disturbed another watcher. A man turned round from the window, against which he had been crouched, and came away.

"What do you want there?" exclaimed Mr. Henry, going forward to confront him.

"Nothing to-night," was the ready answer; "I'll come another time."

All in a moment, Mr. Henry recognized the voice; recognized the low-crowned hat, and

the slightly lame step. He placed himself in the intruder's way.

"I saw you here once before, at the back of the house then: you were looking for the entrance, you said, to deliver a letter. Did you—did you enter the house that night and take anything?"

"No; *you* did."

The cool and positive assertion nearly took away Mr. Henry's presence of mind. He had spoken upon impulse. He was quite uncertain what he ought to do in the emergency, whether anything or not. Meanwhile the stranger was walking quietly away, and Mr. Henry did nothing.

The following day he met Miss Brabazon with some of her relatives and a whole troop of children. She was a little behind the rest, hastening to catch them up.

"Will you allow me to speak to you for one moment, Miss Brabazon?"

"Well," she answered, rather impatiently, as if it were a trouble to remain. It cannot be denied that she had at times treated him

with scant courtesy since the suspicion of him instilled into her mind by Trace.

He told her what he had seen; that he recognised the voice to be the same; recognised the man and his lameness. Miss Brabazon's face grew white.

"He was looking in at us, you say?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Are you coming, Emma? What are you about?" called out the party in front, who had turned and halted. "John will miss the train."

"Mr. Henry, oblige me in one thing," she hurriedly said; "*don't speak of this.* I may trust you?"

"Indeed you may," he answered. "You may doubt me, Miss Brabazon; you have perhaps only too good cause to doubt me; but you may at least rely upon me in this."

Emma Brabazon ran on, the curious words ringing their echo on her ears.

CHAPTER X.

A MAN IN A BLAZE.

THE winter holidays soon passed, and the boys came back to college again. "No pistols this time, I hope, Mr. Loftus," was the Head Master's greeting to that gentleman, and it called a mortified expression into the handsome face. Loftus's whiskers were growing, and he had taken to wear a ring in private. Trace smiled pityingly; Dick made fun of both appendages; but their owner knew not which of the two to admire most.

The routine of school set in, and the boys were busy; some few studying hard, chiefly those who were to go up for the Oxford examination in June; others going in for idle-

ness, mischief, and sport; playing football, snow-balling, making presents and writing love-letters to Miss Rose. All the candidates for the Orville prize were going up for the Oxford examination; it was essential they should pass that, or else withdraw from the competition for the Orville.

But none, whether boys or masters, worked on so patiently and persistently as Mr. Henry, for none had so much to do. His private assistance to Talbot terminated with the holidays; but not so that to George Paradyne. Trace was outrageously angry at the latter fact, and spoke his mind: as Paradyne was going in for the Orville prize, it was *disgraceful* to give him an advantage that the others did not get. Trace's opinion carried the school with it: Paradyne was shunned worse than before, and resentment prevailed against the German master.

"You have only to come to me," Mr. Henry reiterated to them; "I can read with a dozen of you just as well as I can with one. I have no wish surreptitiously to get Para-

dyne on; I would a great deal rather that you should all keep together, and enjoy the same advantages, one as the other; but if you will not come to me, and he does, the blame rests with you."

"Such a thing as coaching a fellow for the Orville prize was never heard of before, you know," retorted Brown major.

"I am not coaching him for the Orville prize. I am not coaching him at all, for the matter of that. He reads the classics with me, and I explain away his difficulties in mathematics. It is preparatory to the Oxford examination, not the Orville."

"The one implies the other," said the angry boys. And they spurned the assistance for themselves; which, metaphorically speaking, was like cutting off their noses to spite their faces. Talbot would have liked to continue, but could not fly in the teeth of popular prejudice.

"Perhaps I'd better give it up," said George Paradyne one day, throwing himself back in his chair at Mr. Henry's.

"Give what up?"

"Everything. What with the life at college and the life at home, I'm ready to—to—pitch the whole overboard," concluded Mr. George, having hesitated for an expression sufficiently strong to denote his feelings.

"You have only to bear up bravely against the one; you'll live it down in time——"

"Rather a prolonged time, it seems," put in George, who was quite unlike his own light-hearted self to-day.

"And for the other," continued Mr. Henry, ignoring the interruption, "you should bear it cheerfully, for you know it is born of love for you."

"Ah, but you can't *imagine* what it is," said the boy, leaning forward, his wide-open bright grey eyes full of eagerness. "It has been worse since we dined at Sir Simon's; that called up to mamma all the old forfeited prosperity. The grumbling never ceases; the lamentation's dreadful. We can't make ourselves rich, if we are not rich, so where's

the use of groaning over it? It drives me wild."

"Hush, George."

"But I can't hush. Mamma is so ungrateful. There's poor Mary slaving in that school, never coming up for the holidays; and here's——"

"George, I'll not hear this. Your mother's trials are very great."

"There's an awful bother about the Christmas bills," went on George, paying slight attention to the reproof. "I wish you'd come down and talk with her."

"I! My talking might do more harm than good."

"You might try to smooth things a little—get her to look at troubles in a different light. Won't you? I can tell you it is miserable for me."

"Well, I'll see. Go on with your Greek now."

Mr. Henry, ever ready to do good where it was to be done—to throw oil on troubled waters—went down that evening to Mrs.

Paradyne's. His interference was not received graciously. Mrs. Paradyne invited him to an opposite chair, and talked at him from the sofa.

"I *should* like to know what business it is of Mr. Henry's," she exclaimed, her cold resentful manner in full play. And of course he could not reply that it was any business of his; but he spoke of the trouble it was causing that fine boy, George; he spoke a little of the sad past, he spoke cheerily of a future that should be brighter. Mrs. Paradyne was often in a grumbling mood, but never in a worse than that evening.

"I can't pay the Christmas bills. The money prepared for them I have had to encroach upon for other things. A new silk gown I was obliged to have; I can't go like an alms-woman. Never before did I have Christmas bills; I paid as I went on; but the cost of things in this place is frightful. I did not want money embarrassment added to my other troubles. It is all through our having come up here."

Mr. Henry winced at the last reproach, too evidently directed to him. "I did it for the best," he gently said. "I was anxious that George should get on."

Mrs. Paradyne lifted her delicate hands with deprecation, and went on with her complaints. They were wearying and painful, even to him; what, then, must they be to the high-spirited and generous boy who was exposed to them always? But Mr. Henry contrived to accomplish his mission, and he left a feeling of peace behind him when he quitted the house.

He had plenty of work on his hands yet that night, and ran all the way home. Dashing into Mrs. Butter's kitchen for a light, a quicker mode than ringing for that esteemed and rather slow landlady to bring it, he dashed against a man who was seated on the kitchen table by fire-light, his legs swaying. No need to wait for recognition this time; it was the young man he had twice seen near the college.

"Well?" said the latter, with cool equa-

nimity; "there's room to pass without knocking me over."

"Who are you?" exclaimed Mr. Henry; "are you waiting to see Mrs. Butter?"

"I have seen her—cross-grained old thing! Her temper does not improve with years."

Before anything more passed, or Mr. Henry had in the least formed an idea as to the aspect of affairs, Mrs. Butter came in with Miss Brabazon. The latter had a shawl over her head, and burst out crying as she spoke to the stranger. "Oh, Tom, why have you come here?"

"Can I be of any assistance to you, Miss Brabazon?" whispered Mr. Henry, partially comprehending the mystery. "Will you make use of my sitting-room?"

"Thank you. It is my brother!"

Yes, it was her brother,—the great incubus on Dr. Brabazon's life. In spite of all that had been done to reclaim him; in defiance of education, position, training, Tom Brabazon had turned out a black sheep amidst the doctor's white flock. Dr. Brabazon had

paid and paid until he could pay no more; Emma Brabazon never awoke to morning light but a dread crossed her mind of what trouble in regard to *him* the day might bring forth. It was not only debt; he had done worse things than spend; he had been in prison for three months, and worn the felon's dress, and had his hair cut close; he had been forbidden his father's house; he dared not show himself there or elsewhere in the broad light of day. Mrs. Butter, faithful to the family, knew about it, and she said a word or two of explanation to Mr. Henry as he sat on the other side of her fireplace, while the brother and sister were in his parlour.

"He wants to stay here," she resentfully cried, giving her fire a fierce stir, as if she were stirring up the delinquent. "He is obliged to be in hiding again; and he avows it with all the brass in the world. I'd not have gone to Miss Emma with my own will, but he made me. Ah! the aching heart that she and my poor master have had with him, that ill-doing Tom!"

Emma came in, her eyes inflamed. "You must let him be in that upper room for a day or two; there's no help for it," she said to Mrs. Butter. "And he must have a bit of supper to-night. I'm going back now, or papa may find out my absence. Of course —you know—his being here must be kept a secret."

"I know, Miss Emma," was the wrathful answer; made doubly wrathful because the gentleman had entered. "He up and told me that the first thing."

"Hold your tongue, Mother Butter," cried Tom Brabazon, laughing as if he had not a care in life. "You have been in scrapes yourself before this, I'll lay. Mind you make me a plum-pudding to-morrow; I've not tasted a piece of one yet. Perhaps you'll introduce this gentleman to me, Emma."

And she obeyed mechanically. In the blow the night had brought, she felt utterly bewildered. "My unfortunate brother, Thomas Brabazon; Mr. Henry."

Mr. Henry acknowledged the introduction

slightly; and took up his hat to walk home with Miss Brabazon. She begged him not to take the trouble, but he quietly insisted, and they went out together.

"Is this the same that you have seen near the college?" she asked, as they went along.

"It is."

"Ah, yes; I only inquired to see if you remembered him. He denies, most positively, having entered the study that night; and when I spoke of the pencil, he apparently did not know what I meant. He had written a letter to papa, asking for some trifling temporary assistance, intending to send it in and wait for the answer. But he saw the front sitting-rooms were in darkness, and went round, fearing we were out, to see if the back ones were. That is what he says. We were out, you know, as the want of light showed him, and he returned to London, and was arrested before he could come again. When I mentioned the pencil, he asked whether I thought he had become

worse than a common thief to touch *that*. I don't think he took it."

"But why have used an evasion to me—that he was looking for the entrance to the college?" returned Mr. Henry.

"He fears an enemy in every person he meets, and I suppose wished to pass himself off as a stranger. Mr. Henry, I must rely on you not to betray his sojourn at your house."

"Betray him! You little know me. Anything in the world I can do for him, or for you, or for Dr. Brabazon, in this painful emergency, I shall only be too happy to do, faithfully and truly."

"You see now," she said, with a faint smile, "that we have too much trouble of our own to be severe upon others. Every bit of secret pride has been taken out of us, and papa's hair is grey before its time. He is the eldest son."

"The eldest son?"

"Yes, the oldest of us all. He went wrong first of all at Oxford, and instead

of retrieving his position, or allowing it to be retrieved for him, as others do who get into debt there, he went on from bad to worse. Good night, Mr. Henry."

She hung her shawl up in the inner hall, smoothed her hair, and went in as if nothing unusual had happened. Mr. Jebb was sitting with Dr. Brabazon; they were in an animated discussion about some popular question of the day, and her absence had passed unnoticed. Miss Rose had disappeared. Miss Rose, finding the coast clear, had taken the opportunity to visit her treasure drawer upstairs. It contained presents and love-letters; the one of about as much real value as the other; but the young lady coveted both. Some fresh parcels had just arrived to be added to the collection: we may as well look over her while she examines them. And I beg to state, for the benefit of society in general, that the letters are but copies of genuine originals.

"Dear Miss Rose,—I hope you will accept

of the enclosed trifle. With my best love, believe me yours ever affectionately,

"Dick L."

Which stood for Dick Loftus. The enclosed trifle was a thin paper scent-case, pretty to the eye and sweet to the nose. Rose gave a few sniffs, and flung it into the drawer to take up another.

"My dearest Miss Rose,—Will you oblige me by trying the accompanying? That blue bonnet you wore on Sunday was charming. Ever yours, C. Brown."

Meaning Brown minor. A packet of barleysugar came with this, and Miss Rose began upon it greedily. Then she turned to the third.

"Ever dear Rose,—I take this favourable opertunity of writeing to you, Our desk got in a row this morning and I can't go out to buy that broche I told you of, If Stiggings

buys it you fling it in his face, I send you a few rasons if you'll except of them, We are going to have a joly lark this week with Mother Butter, Your affectionate lover, Alfred Jones."

Mr. Alfred Jones was a gentleman of Miss Rose's own age, thirteen. She put as many raisins into her mouth as it would conveniently hold, and went on again.

"Beloved Miss Rose,—*Would* you wear the accompanied box for my sake, I mean its contents, which Jones minor (that wretched little muff in the fifth form, you know) said he should buy for you, the impudense of the youngster. I expect some jam to-morrow and shall send you a pot. Ever your devoted and respectful admirer, W. Stiggings. P.S.—I hope you have less bother now with those beastly lessons. Miss Brabazon's a tyrent."

The box contained a very smart brooch,

for which W. Stiggins, who was a year older than Jones minor, had given ninepence. Miss Rose stuck it into her dress and figured off before the glass, eating alternately the raisins and the barleysugar. Emma had not called her down, or come to see after her, so she thought she might write her acknowledgments, and got out a pencil and some delicate miniature note-paper, straw-coloured and notched round the edge.

"Dear Mr. Loftus,—Thank you for the scent-paper, it's very delicious, but not so nice as that almond-rock you sent me. I've no more time, for fear Emma should come up. Ever yours, Rose B. P.S.—I saw you all riding that donkey on the common, why didn't you look up? I was with Jessie Gall and their governess."

This accomplished, she went on to the next, taking them in rotation.

"Dear Mr. Brown,—The barleysugar's

first-rate; I've eaten it nearly all. It's a love of a bonnet. I wanted Emma to let me have a blue mantle like it, and she went and bought a black! Ever yours, Rose B. P.S.—Please excuse the smuge; an old raisen out of my drawer got crushed on it."

And the next was to Jones minor.

"Dear Mr. Jones,—I'm very sorry about the brooch; perhaps you could get me something else. Don't you ever speak to Stiggins—I shouldn't. The raisens are gritty; perhaps you droped them. Do pay out that Mother Butter. She told Emma the other day I was a little minx. Couldn't you steal her cat? So no more at present from yours ever, Rose B. P.S.—You ought to do some dictation."

And then came the last.

"Dear Mr. Stiggins,—The brooch is beautiful; I've got it in my frock now, but daredn't go down in it for fear of Emma. I

wonder you could ever mention Jones minor to me. Why do you speak to him? I don't. I like jam, apricot especially. The lessons are worse than ever, and I wish German was buried. Emma's going to have me put into linear drawing, or some such horrid name, so I mean to break all the pencils. Ever yours, Rose B. P.S.—I'd tell you of something I heard from Jessie Gall, only I'm afraid Emma will be up."

These various missives were directed to the gentlemen, each of them receiving the title of "esquire," and Miss Rose locked up her treasures, the brooch included. A little cousin of hers who was in the junior class, and ran in at will, was made the messenger on either side; otherwise the young men might have found it difficult to convey their offerings to the shrine.

A few days passed. One dark evening Mrs. Butter was in her kitchen, making toast for her not very welcome lodger-guest, who had descended from his room of concealment

to talk to her and enjoy the warmth, when there came a sudden and imperious knocking at the casement. Down went the toasting-fork, and Tom Brabozon sprang from the fire into a dark corner.

"Not there, Mr. Tom," she whispered. "Better go upstairs again; it's safest."

One fear only was in the mind of both of them—that this peremptory summons must mean mischief to the fugitive, hiding from the law. Mrs. Butter, when he had escaped, drew the heavy red curtain from before the window, and looked out. She expected to see some officers of justice there, or something as formidable; her heart rose to her mouth; he *was* her old master's son, with all his faults and sins, and she would have shielded him with her life.

"Don't open the door on any account," softly cried Tom Brabazon, from the stairs.

Between the light inside and the darkness out, combined with her own flurry, Mrs. Butter could see absolutely nothing. A form in a hat, as of a short, stout man, at last

made itself dimly visible to her, but he seemed to be standing with his back to the window; at least, she could discern no features.

"What do you please to want, sir?" she called out, deeming it well to be civil.

Instead of making any answer, the glass was rapped at again, more peremptorily than before. Mrs. Butter drew the casement open; it had upright iron bars on the outside, so there was no danger that any Philistine, above the size of a thin rabbit, could make his way in.

"What is it?" she asked.

But still the man never spoke; and now that her eyes were getting accustomed to the darkness, she saw that he had no face, or if he had a face, it was enveloped and hidden from view. A disagreeable feeling, as of some vague fear, stole over her.

"What is it, sir, I ask? Won't you please to say what you want?"

All in a moment, without warning, the man burst into a blaze. Blazed up as if he had

been coated with pitch or stuffed with gunpowder, and had suddenly caught fire. Mrs. Butter, nearly beside herself with terror, darted back from the window, uttering scream upon scream.

For some little time all was confusion. Mr. Henry, and Tom Brabazon, the one brought from his room by the cries and the light, the other forgetting his needful privacy in the interests of humanity, rushed out of doors, each with a bucket of water. But the burning man, who appeared to have arrived on an iron barrow, was suddenly wheeled to a safe spot off the premises, and a set of gleeful savages were dancing and shouting round him, while he blazed away. Tom Brabazon stole indoors again.

Need you be told that this was the work of the college boys? It was the "jolly lark" hinted at by Jones minor to Miss Rose. They had made a straw figure, introducing a modicum of gunpowder, and fired it before Madam Butter's eyes for her especial edification.

Dancing, howling, shouting, the boys did

not see the approach of Mr. Baker until that gentleman was close upon them. He had happened to be passing within view, and ran up in terror. They took flight then; and indeed there was nothing to wait for, for the figure had nearly emitted his last spark. Mr. Baker, rather in fear still, perplexed, and outrageously angry, threw out his arms in the dark, but only succeeded in grasping one: the rest eluded him. That one was George Paradyne. Mrs. Butter, in a state of fury, came out with her tale.

"I'll cane *you* at all events," said Mr. Baker to his captive. "Come with me."

"I have not done anything," said George. "I don't know now what has happened."

"I'll teach you, you vagabond, what has happened," stuttered Mr. Baker, still further exasperated by the assumption of ignorance, which he entirely disbelieved. "Come along."

He marshalled George Paradyne away to the hall, holding his jacket collar. Every boy had got back before them. About twenty were in the fray, and Mr. Baker had not dis-

tinguished one. They were seated sedately at their evening lessons now, in common with the rest, and not to be distinguished. The angry master got out his cane.

"One single moment, Mr. Baker, before you strike me," said George Paradyne. "I *declare* that I was not in this. I knew nothing of it: I was going to Mr. Henry's for my usual reading when I came upon the blaze. Surely they will tell you I was not in it! They never do let me join in anything."

Mr. Baker paused, cane in air. George Paradyne had certainly been amidst the throng: he did not believe that he was not joining in the mischief.

"I was not in it, indeed, sir: I had but run up when you came. I was asking what it was."

"Who was in it, if you were not?" asked Mr. Baker. "You saw."

"I saw some of them."

"Tell me who they were. I shall cane you if you don't."

George looked round on the boys, as if to say, "Will none of you exculpate me?" They dropped their eyes on their books, and made no response.

"I shall cane you, Paradyne, if you don't tell."

"I can't help it, sir. I will not tell."

He took his punishment, a very severe one. Pulling his jacket on his stiff and aching arms, when it was over, he once more looked at the lot as he went out. And the boys, in their heart of hearts, felt that George Paradyne, the despised, was made of nobler stuff than they were.

CHAPTER XI.

ONLY THE HEAT!

IN one of the houses in Prospect Terrace there sat a family at early breakfast. A nice family; the growing up sons and daughters loving and obedient, the father and mother anxiously training them to good. It was the Talbots. They had quitted their close residence in Pimlico, and taken this in the healthy country district; having moved in at the recent quarter. Mr. Talbot was a tall, spare man, rather absorbed in cares; Mrs. Talbot a pleasant woman with a countenance and demeanour serenely cheerful, imparting in some way an idea of peace. James, known to you as Earl of Shrewsbury, was the eldest son. He was at the breakfast

table now, for this was the last day of the Easter holidays, which he had been spending at home.

Yes, time had gone on at Orville, as it goes on with us all. April was in, and the Easter holidays were now at an end. There was nothing much to tell of the last term, no particular event to record. Mrs. Butter overcame her fright in time, but not her anger; Tom Brabazon disappeared again; the German master was patiently working; and George Paradyne was battling with the school enmity, and bearing on his own way in spite of circumstances. He would have done it less gallantly but for the ever-constant, daily counsels of Mr. Henry. Over and over again, but for that, the boy would have broken down, for the battle against him waxed fierce and strong. The step taken by Sir Simon Orville, in inviting Mrs. Paradyne and George to dinner on Christmas Day, meant to be a healer of strife, turned out just the reverse. Trace, powerless to rebel against it, concentrated his indignation within him at

the time, to let it loose on the head of the unhappy boy later. Not in a violent way, not in any manner that could be taken hold of: he was civil to Paradyne's face; but he so worked craftily on others, that a regular cabal set in against George Paradyne. Mr. Henry, so to say, bore the brunt for him. He soothed the insults, he talked the boy's resentful spirit into peace, he cheered him bravely on, he encouraged him to persevere and be patient. The Talbots were speaking of this enmity as they sat at breakfast. James suddenly interposed with a question to his father.

"Papa, shall you not be late?"

Mr. Talbot glanced at his watch and smiled. The idea of his son's giving him a caution on the score; he, the most strictly punctual clerk the bank possessed. "It's odd how a feeling of dislike does arise in schools against a particular boy," he observed. "It was so in the school I went to, I remember. There's sure to be good cause for it. These instincts are generally to be trusted."

"Papa, what do you call instinct?"

"What do I call instinct?" repeated Mr. Talbot. "I should have thought you were old enough, James, to know what instinct meant, without my telling you."

James laughed. "Because I think in this case our instinct is *for* Paradyne, instead of against him. I know mine is."

"Then why is he disliked?"

"Well, I don't know. There is something not square, I believe, known to a few of the seniors only. The feeling against him is very strong."

Mr. Talbot rose, and put his watch in his pocket. He always breakfasted with it on the table. "I don't understand it at all," he said; "but I must be going now."

James went to the front door and opened it. Now that he had risen, you could see James Talbot's height. He was already nearly six feet, almost the tallest in the school. The boys were wont to say that the shots had made his legs grow. Mr. Talbot walked away quickly, and a boy, wearing the

college cap, came up and accosted James at the door. At the same moment Mrs. Talbot came out in a commotion.

"Oh, James, my letter! Papa was to have posted it in town. Run and give it to him."

"Allow me," said the stranger, raising his trencher to Mrs. Talbot, and taking the letter from her hand. She looked at him, and was struck with the fine character of the attractive countenance—the open candour of the large grey eyes.

"That's Paradyne," whispered James, watching him as he caught Mr. Talbot.

"*That* Paradyne! Then I am sure——"

But he had accomplished his mission, and was coming back again, laughing at the haste he had made. "Mr. Talbot bade me say he did not know there was any letter to take," he observed to Mrs. Talbot.

"No, I forgot to tell him. Thank you very much."

He lifted his cap to her again as he walked away, and she went in with the earl.

"James," said Mrs. Talbot to her son,

"you tell me that the school has a prejudice against that boy?"

"Indeed it has. Something more than a prejudice. We are all against him."

"And your motive—your reason, I should say?"

"I really don't know. The prejudice is there, and we all share in it, and that's all."

"Oh, James! is it right?"

"Perhaps not. I have thought it not quite the thing all along; but one must go with the stream. They are very poor, those Paradynes. Don't look angry, mamma; I am not speaking it as a reproach."

"I hope not. I think a son of mine would scarcely do so. They cannot well be poorer than we are."

"Yes, they are, a great deal. It is our education that keeps papa poor—mine especially. I shall try to repay you for it some day, mother mine. A vision comes over me now and again of gaining the Orville. I should get to college then, and all would be easy."

"You vain boy. The Orville will be for some one of your seniors, sir."

Talbot laughed. "Yes, I fear it is but a vision of dreamland. But oh, mother,"—and his tone changed to solemn earnest,—"what a boon it would be!"

"Tell me why you dislike George Paradyne," resumed Mrs. Talbot, breaking the slight pause.

"I don't dislike him. I like him in spite of all. One can't help admiring him for his spirit; he throws off all our shafts so bravely. He is one of the most generous, open fellows possible. I see you don't understand, and I don't understand it myself. Few of us do. There's an awful feeling about his going in for the Orville."

Mrs. Talbot gave it up as a bad job, and opened the book for the ten minutes' reading to the children, never omitted in the house.

The Talbots had made some acquaintance in the place, and Mrs. Talbot questioned Mrs. Gall and one or two more, what the dislike of George Paradyne arose from. She

felt more interested on the subject than she could account for. But none were able to answer her. Mrs. Gall had herself put the same query to her son, and nothing satisfactory came of it.

As the term went on, the uncomfortable feeling in the school grew greater and greater. But there was little time for anything but study, for the Oxford examination was approaching fast.

One hot Saturday afternoon, when the College had holiday, Mr. Henry went to the railway station to inquire after an expected parcel of books. Saturday afternoon was no holiday for him. He had three private lessons to give in it. As he left the station, walking very fast to keep his time at Mrs. Gall's, a sharp, sudden pain seized upon him. He was leaning against the fence of the plantation, white and faint, when Sir Simon Orville passed.

"Why, bless me, what's to do?" exclaimed that hearty gentleman. "Have you been run over?"

Mr. Henry smiled: his colour was coming back again. He said something about a sudden pain.

"Been eating green gooseberries?" asked the unsophisticated man. "I caught young Dick buying a quart. He's crunching the lot."

"It took me here," said Mr. Henry, touching his left side. "It's gone now."

"Why, that's near the heart; it couldn't have been there, I should think," said Sir Simon, peering at him curiously. "Well, we are close at home; come in to Pond Place and rest."

"Thank you, Sir Simon; I am all right now. I must go on quickly to my pupils."

"I'll tell you what it is, sir; you are overworking yourself. That's my opinion."

"Oh, no. Folks can't do too much at my age."

"That depends upon the amount of strength: I could have plodded on night and day; you seem to get more of a lath than ever. What's the reason you never will

accept my hospitality? Got any dislike to me?—taken up a prejudice? I know I'm a plain man, without education; but you might put up with that."

"If I could only show you how I respect you, Sir Simon; if I could but live to be of service to you!" was the impulsive answer. "But, indeed, I can never get time for visiting: the little Galls are waiting for me now."

And away he went through the plantation, leaving Sir Simon considerably puzzled, as he had been before, at the earnestness of the words and manner; for they seemed to imply more than was on the surface. That afternoon, in the very midst of explaining to Master Fred Gall an abstruse difficulty in the Latin grammar, Mr. Henry leaned back in his chair and quietly fainted away. With a hullabaloo that might have been heard at the distant college, the children threw open the door and scattered away, pell-mell.

The noise brought forth Mrs. Gall and her

eldest son; who had stepped in at home, as he had the liberty to do on holidays. They took off his neckcloth and brought him wine, and were very tender with him.

"Do forgive me," he murmured, in deep contrition for the trouble he was causing. "The heat must have overpowered me; I have been walking fast."

Mrs. Gall would not hear of his continuing the lesson. She made him lie on the sofa and rest. She and her children had grown to like him very much; which the senior boy, in his prejudice, silently shrugged his shoulders at. But there was something about him this afternoon, in his transitory helplessness, his gratitude for the care shown, that appealed to William Gall's better feelings and half won his heart. Mr. Henry could not rest long; he had a German lesson to give at five o'clock, and must go home first for the necessary books. When he went out, Gall went with him, and offered his arm.

"You will walk all the better for it, Mr. Henry. Years back I used to have fainting-

fits myself, and know how they take the strength away."

Mr. Henry accepted it, and they walked on together. He had always liked Gall: never a better head and heart *au fond* than his. Leaning too readily, perhaps, to the prejudices of the school he partially swayed; but Mr. Henry allowed for that: others might have done it more offensively. Gall had never taken an active part in the cabal against young Paradyne, or in the contempt lavished on the German master; but he had tacitly acquiesced in it.

Some of the boys happened to be in the quadrangle; and, to describe the commotion when Gall passed arm-in-arm with the enemy —as Trace was in the private habit of calling Mr. Henry—would be beyond any pen. Gall, thoroughly independent always, vouchsafed a cool nod to the sea of astonished faces, and continued his way. If anything could have daunted him, it was the supercilious contempt on Bertie Loftus's handsome face: anything that Gall did was sure to excite that, for there

was no good feeling between them. Bertie would have done the same thing himself for Mr. Henry, or for any one else in case of need; but he lost sight of that in his prejudice against Gall. Mr. Henry called for some coffee on going in: coffee was his panacea for most ailments.

"You'll stay and take a cup with me," he said cordially, to Gall. "I feel quite well now. It must have been the heat."

Mrs. Butter brought the coffee and some bread-and-butter, and the two chatted together. Gall had never seen so much of Mr. Henry in all the past months as in this one hour, and he felt ashamed for having turned the cold shoulder on him.

"I hope I shall see more of you, Mr. Henry, than I have seen hitherto," he said, when he was shaking hands to leave. "Is there nothing I can do for you? If there is, tell me. I hope you'll not have a renewal of this."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Henry, looking straight at him with his pleasant eyes. "I

wish I could get you to alter one thing—the persecution of young Paradyne."

"Well, it is too bad," observed Gall. "But I can't make the school like Paradyne if they dislike him."

"Can you tell me *why* they dislike him?" pointedly asked Mr. Henry: for times and again it had struck him that the particulars of the Liverpool business must have been privately circulated by Trace or Loftus.

"No, that I can't," frankly answered Gall. "I have heard Trace hint at some reason for dislike, but he never said what. Miss Brabazon asked me about it once, but I did not learn anything. I think they are vexed that he, a new fellow, should have his name down for the Orville Exhibition."

"That should not cause them to persecute him."

"True. But, you see, when once a prejudice arises, it is not easy to allay it."

"Did it ever occur to you to realize Paradyne's position to your own mind?" asked Mr. Henry. "He is clever, generous, noble,

forbearing; wishing to live in amity with all; and yet he is subjected to this cruel persecution: and for no cause that I can find out. Think it over, Mr. Gall, at your leisure; and now goodbye, and thank you for your company."

Mr. Henry sat back in his chair, listening to the senior boy's departing footsteps. There were times when he felt utterly depressed, as if every bit of spirit and energy had gone out of him. He was in a false position at Orville College, and he knew it. Since the first day of his entrance he had been fighting a battle with conscience; this of itself, with his sensitive mind, was enough to wear him out; it needed not his hard work added to it.

"I can't keep it up," he said to himself, as he rose, caught up some books, and went out to give his lesson. "And it is not right I should. Once the Oxford examination's over, the end shall come; and then, if I have to leave the college, why, I must leave it. I'd rather be back at Heidelburg."

Meanwhile Gall was walking slowly away, and "thinking over" the matter in regard to Paradyne: not because Mr. Henry had desired him to do it, but on his own score. Gall's was a just nature; he felt vexed with himself for the past; angry with the school in general.

It was not an opportune moment for Loftus to meet him, with his supercilious face, his still more supercilious words. In the middle of the grass, near the gymnasium-ground, they encountered each other. The under-current of enmity between these two was of long-standing, and Gall, at least, had inwardly and bitterly resented it. What Loftus said was never precisely known; some stinging taunt, reflecting on the "new friendship," meaning little, perhaps; but the other was not in a mood to bear it. The next moment, Gall had knocked him down.

He lay sprawling, the distinguished Loftus, his golden curls in contact with the base earth, his handsome nose bleeding with the blow. Gall stood erect, with compressed

lips; the wondering boys were flocking up, and Mother Butter's dog stood by, barking fiercely, as if it were a raree-show.

Loftus rose. Whether he would have struck again was a question; he was not deficient in personal bravery, rather the contrary, but these elegant dandies rarely go in for blows. No opportunity was given one way or the other, for Mr. Henry, hastening up, stepped between them.

"Move away," said Loftus to him. "What business is it of yours?"

"The business of authority," was Mr. Henry's answer, delivered with calm decision. "So long as I hold the position of master here, I shall act as such when need arises. Gentlemen,"—and he looked at both equally—"there must be no more of this."

"You need not be alarmed on your friend's behalf," said Loftus, with an ugly stress on the word "friend." "You, Gall,"—and he turned to him—"shall answer to me for this, later."

They moved away in different directions,

Gall one road, Loftus another, Mr. Henry a third; and the astonished boys stood, looking after them with a vacant stare, hardly able to believe that the transitory scene had been real.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE SHOP IN OXFORD STREET.

MISS BRABAZON was walking through Oxford Street on that memorable afternoon, taking her time, as befitted the heat of the day, and looking into the shop windows; which, truth to say, bore attraction for her, as they do for most persons who see them rarely.

"I daresay I could get it here," she thought, halting at a jeweller's shop and finally entering it. A double shop with two separate doors, but Miss Brabazon did not observe that. She had broken the key of her watch and wanted a new one, but wished it of a particular pattern. A middle-aged,

pleasant-looking man came forward, whom she took to be the master. Yes, he had keys of the shape she described, he said, and reached out a tray.

While he was fitting the key to the watch, Miss Brabazon's eyes went roaming (naturally) amidst the many attractive articles of plate and jewelry. They alighted on a gold pencil with a diamond set in the top. Except that the stone was considerably smaller, it was very much like the one lost from the college.

"That is a beautiful pencil!" she exclaimed.

"Very, ma'am. The diamond makes it also a valuable one."

"Is it not very unusual to see a diamond set in a pencil-case?"

"Rather so," he replied. "I have made them to order before now. We have a better one than that, but it's not for sale. Not yet, at least. It is one of our pledges in the other shop; was left with us some months back."

"Do you mean it was—pawned?" she asked, bringing out the word gingerly, as ladies in general do.

"Yes, ma'am."

"But—is this a pawnbroker's?" she hastily asked.

"The other shop is, ma'am."

A thousand thoughts came crowding over her; a suspicion arose, almost amounting to an instinct, that it was the pencil they had lost. "When was it left with you, do you say?" she inquired.

"Some time last autumn; either in September or October."

"I wish you would let me see it," she exclaimed.

"It is quite against all rule, ma'am, to show our pledged goods," was the reply of the jeweller.

"Is it? But if you would! The truth is—I don't see why I should not tell you—we lost one about that time. I do not wish to claim the pencil, only to see it for my own satisfaction, just to set my doubts at rest.

They have been—" dreadful, was the word on her tongue, but she paused in time and substituted another—"tiresome."

The jeweller was an honest man; kind and considerate. It was, as he said, entirely against the rule to show pledges left with them; but the young lady seemed very anxious, and was evidently sincere. He stood in hesitation.

"I am Miss Brabazon," she resumed, drawing out her card-case and showing her cards. "My father is Dr. Brabazon, of Orville College; you may have heard of it and of him. Indeed you may trust us not to make any fuss or trouble about this."

"Orville College," repeated the jeweller. "I am almost sure that was the address given with the pencil. I think the person who pledged it said he was a master there."

A rush of conviction and the image of Mr. Henry came over her together. "Do let me see it," she said; "I am certain it is the same."

He went into the other shop by a com-

municating door, was away for several minutes, and came back with a box in which was the pencil. She only needed to take one glance at it; the chased gold was bright as ever, the diamond flashed with all its accustomed brilliancy. It was Dr. Brabazon's. "Yes, it is papa's," she exclaimed. "Who was it that pledged it?"

"The name in the book is Henry Jebb; I have been looking. But there seems to have been some doubt whether——. Here, Simms," broke off the jeweller, "step this way."

"Henry Jebb!" mentally repeated Miss Brabazon, as a young man, running his hand through an amazing head of light hair, came in from the other shop.

"Tell this lady the particulars of the transaction I have been asking you about," said his master. "When you took in this pencil, you know."

"It was Watson that took it in, sir, not me; but I was standing by and heard what passed. The gentleman came in, mem," he

continued, turning to Miss Brabazon, "and said he wanted a little temporary accommodation for a few days, and he pulled the pencil out of his waistcoat pocket, mem, and asked what we'd lend upon it; as much as ever we could, he hoped, for he was hard up till his remittances came. Well, Watson, seeing a pencil like that, with the diamond stone in the top, was rather sharp; he asked whether it was the party's own, and if it wasn't a family relic, and lots more things; he was quite down upon him, mem, in fact, and gave him a look from head to foot as if he didn't think him exactly the one to be offering such an article. 'Hadn't you better call in the nearest policeman and tell him to question me?' says the customer. 'I can go where I'm known if you decline to negotiate.' Well, what with his coolness, and his composed manner, and his gentleman's voice, Watson thought it was all right, mem, and lent him seven pounds upon it. 'What name?' says Watson. 'Henry,' answered he, and stopped. 'Henry what?' says

Watson; 'is that the surname or Christian name?' and the stranger stroked his chin for a moment looking at him. 'I suppose I must give it in?' said he, 'Henry Jebb.' 'What address?' asks Watson next. 'Oh, Fleet Street,' said he. 'That won't do this time,' says Watson, 'I should like the real one.' 'Then take it,' said he, picking up the money and putting it in his pocket, and he gave the address that is in the book, sir,"—turning to the jeweller—"Orville College. 'I'm one of its masters,' he went on, 'and that pencil was presented to me by the pupils, so you may be sure I shall redeem it. In a week's time from this it will be in my pocket again.' But here it is still," concluded the speaker; "and it often is so."

"You have a good memory, Simms," observed his master, smiling.

"And so I have, sir. I won't take upon me to say that those were the precise words used, but I know they are not far out on either side. Watson said afterwards that he'd lay half-a-crown Henry was the right

name, though he put it down as Henry Jebb."

"Was he a young man?" asked Miss Brabazon; feeling how superfluous was the question in her certainty of conviction.

"Oh yes, mem; youngish, that is."

"That's all, Simms; you may go. Has this helped to solve your doubts at all, ma'am?" continued the jeweller, turning to Miss Brabazon.

"It has indeed," she sadly said. "We have suspected him—at least some of us did—from the first. His name is not Jebb. But I would rather not say any more about it. Do not think me uncivil," she hastened to add; "indeed I am sensible of your kind courtesy, and thank you very much. You will keep the pencil safe; and please keep—if you would so far oblige me—the matter secret too."

He came round to open the door for her, assuring her of his discretion, and that the pencil would be perfectly safe.

"Mr. Henry!" she repeated over and over

again to herself as she went home. "And I had nearly overcome those doubts of him that so pained me. But the impudence of his using poor, unconscious Mr. Jebb's name!"

And the "impudence" of the thing did strike upon her so forcibly that, in spite of her distress, she stood still and gave way to a burst of laughter, unable to restrain it within bounds.

Dr. Brabazon was alone in his study when she entered, looking over some books just brought in. As if anxious to get the communication over, she sat down at once on a stool at his feet, and told him all. It must be remembered that *his* suspicions had never been directed to Mr. Henry, and for the first few minutes he really thought his daughter was dreaming, or that the day's heat had affected her usually cool brain.

"It is impossible, Emma. Steal my pencil! —Mr. Henry! My dear, you don't know what you are saying."

"Papa, I am very sorry to say it. You must judge for yourself; but I don't see how

it can have been otherwise. You have not been listening to me."

"Begin again. Surprise took my listening faculties away."

She untied her bonnet, pushed it off her head, and began again; telling him of Trace's back suspicions and their foundation; of her recent discovery of the pencil, and what passed. "Is there any *room* to doubt, papa?"

"Stay a moment, Emma: why did you not inform me of this doubt of Mr. Henry at the time?"

"Because I thought, as you do now, that it was so very unlikely; and also—I feared—that some one altogether different might have taken it."

"Who?"

"Forgive me, papa; I know how you dislike the name to be mentioned—Tom."

Dr. Brabazon frowned. "How could you possibly have suspected him when he was not near the place? That comes of letting your thoughts run upon him always.

You should have told me this about Mr. Henry."

She sat with her finger on her cheek, looking out apparently at the boys in the playground, and asking herself whether to tell the whole now—that Tom *was* near the place the evening of the loss. But to what end? To hear of his being near them, always destroyed her father's rest; and the suspicion was now quite removed from him.

"Mr. Henry must have intended to redeem it within a week, as he said, papa; or he would never have disclosed the fact of his being one of the college masters: he hoped, I suppose, to replace it here before it was missed. I wonder why he did not do it?"

"Emma, I could have trusted that young man with untold gold."

"What shall you do about it, papa?"

"I don't know what to do," said the doctor, rousing himself from a pause of perplexed thought. "Look you, child; he *must* stay here until the Oxford examination. To dis-

charge him now might peril the passing of the boys."

"I see. Of course it might. And he is so excellent a master!"

"I wish; I *wish* I had not heard this."

Emma wished so too; wished, rather, there had been nothing to hear.

"His staying on a little while will not make matters worse, papa," she resumed, trying to put the best side of things outwards; "he might stay until the end of the term. We have missed nothing since. And if I had not happened to go into that shop for a watch-key, we should be in just as much ignorance as we were before."

"If!" said the doctor, "if! if! life is half made up of ifs. I'll take a night's rest upon this unpleasantness, Emma; meanwhile keep strict counsel."

"I shall keep that always, poor young man. I can't help being sorry for him; he is so hardworking and so friendless; and, papa, with it all, he is a gentleman. But what about the pencil?"

"Time enough to think of that," said the doctor. "It won't run away."

It was all utterly incomprehensible to Dr. Brabazon. As he said, he could have *trusted* Mr. Henry; not only with untold gold, but with things far more precious. He thought that some great emergency, some urgent need of money must have tempted him; it had tempted others before him, as the world's history tells. It struck the doctor that in this must lie the secret of Mr. Henry's demeanour; there was always a sort of shrinking reticence observable to *him*, not to others. "As if—I declare, as if he were conscious of some acted wrong towards me!" cried the doctor aloud, the new thought striking him. Whatever his degree of guilt, Dr. Brabazon felt certain it was bitterly repented of. To part with him before the Oxford examination, thereby suddenly cutting short the thread of the French and German instruction, was not to be thought of: and the Head Master buried the unwelcome knowledge within his breast, and suffered things to go on as usual.

It was drawing so near now, that all other interests gave place to it. There was a good deal of rivalry amidst the boys going up for it; there was some jealousy, a little disputing. The remoter competition for the Orville prize was lost sight of now. It was at the option of the Head Master to send the boys up for this Oxford examination, or to retain them; according as, in his judgment, they were sufficiently prepared, or the contrary.

The elder ones, those whose age would preclude trial another year, were to go; that was certain; and take their chance: but in regard to the rest it lay with Dr. Brabazon. Only, if they did not go up for the Oxford; or, going up, did not pass; they could not compete for the Orville. And of the candidates, there was not one, Gall excepted, and perhaps Loftus, who did not secretly pray that Paradyne might not be allowed to go up. Altogether there was as much excitement and commotion just now in the college over the coming Oxford

examination, as there is in a bribery borough on the eve of a general election.

Mr. Loftus sat in his bedroom at Pond Place, fingering his cherished pistols. It was the day subsequent to his encounter with Gall, and he was spending it at Sir Simon's. Loftus had not been himself since the mishap; he was not one to cherish revenge in a general way, but he did in this instance firmly resolve that Gall should suffer. On all occasions of his visits to his uncle's these pistols were got out, their state ascertained, their shape and points admired. It was Sunday afternoon, but Loftus was rubbing them with wash-leather; he and Leek, who stood by, talking in a desultory manner.

"Loftus, I would not care to possess pistols if I had to keep them locked up out of sight," cried Leek rather inopportunely.

"Ah," said Loftus, "wait until I am my own master. I wish I *might* use them," he added, significantly. "I could put a little bullet into somebody with all the pleasure in life—that is, if he were not too great a coward to

meet me; but snobs are always cowards. Give me that oil, Onions."

"You mean Gall," said Onions, handing the phial, and taking out the cork by way of facilitating operations; upon which a strong smell of bergamotte was diffused through the room. Onions gave a sniff.

"I say, Loftus, this is hair oil!"

"It will do; I've got no other. Yes, snobs are safe to be cowards; it's in their blood, and they can't help it," observed he, dropping a modicum of oil on the bright steel and delicately rubbing it. I'd lay you all I'm worth; I'd lay you these pistols, Onions, that if I called out Gall, he'd laugh in my face."

"Bosh, Loftus! Folks don't fight duels now," was the slighting remark of Onions.

"Not on this side the Channel. No; and that's what the fellow would shelter himself under—a custom obsolete. Gall has insulted me, and if I live I'll make him suffer for it. I *should* like to put a bullet into him," continued Bertie, grandly.

"It was too bad," said sympathising Onions. "I should pitch into him, Loftus."

Mr. Loftus threw up his head. "Pitching in" was not in his line, or anything so vulgar. "It was a great mistake to allow duelling to go out," he observed, in his lordly manner. There's no way left now for gentlemen to resent an insult. You can't fight a fellow with your fists, as if you were a prize-fighter; you can't bring an action against him, and let things be blabbed out to the world."

"You can kick him down stairs," said Onions.

Mr. Loftus scorned a refutation. "Just lay hold of this end, will you, while I rub. Mark my words, Onions, before fifty years have gone over our heads, duelling will be in again."

"I say! is this Sir Simon coming up?" cried Leek, hurriedly.

Loftus listened for a moment, and then bundled pistols and leather and oil into the drawer. Sir Simon was passing to his own

room, and there was no certainty that he would not look into this. So, for the time being, the polishing and the discussion were alike cut short.

But on the following morning, Onions, whose tongue was as open as his own nature, got talking to the school. And the matter reached the ears of Gall.

"Says he would like to meet me in a duel! says he is a better shot than I! *Is* he? If I chose to take him at his word and meet him, he'd see who was the best shot."

"And so I am a better shot," affirmed Loftus, coming forward to face Gall. "What should *you* know about shooting? It is an art that belongs to gentlemen."

In point of fact, neither of the two could shoot at all. Gall lifted his finger.

"Look here, Loftus. This is not a time to be taken up with petty interests: I can't afford the leisure for it, if you can; neither shall the school. We'll settle matters, you and I, when the Oxford's over."

"Agreed. Mind you don't flinch from it," was the scornful conclusion.

Gall spoke rather without his host, in saying that the school should not waste its time in disputes. At that very moment, the school was divided into groups, some taking Gall's part, some taking Loftus's, some differing on private matters of their own. After morning study, the various dissensions seemed to have merged into one single outbreak, and that was between Loftus minor and Paradyne. Paradyne had been taunted well that morning, by Dick especially, and he turned at length on the taunter. It was in the quadrangle.

"Because I have borne what hardly anybody else would, you think I *can't* retaliate; you think I am a coward! Try me, Dick Loftus."

Dick—hot, impulsive, passionate Dick—dashed in and struck the first blow. That was his answer. Off went the jackets, the boys closed round in a ring; it was to be an impromptu, stand-up, hand-to-hand fight.

And the very cries would have decided it,

could cries decide. Every encouragement was heaped cheerily on Dick, every derisive insult that tongue can utter was levelled at Paradyne: never had the feeling of the school been more palpably displayed than now. Paradyne stood his ground bravely: cool, collected, retaining his temper and his self-possession, he proved a great deal more than a match for Dick, who had very shortly to acknowledge himself beaten. Paradyne had not a scratch upon his face; parrying all blows successfully, to this he chiefly confined himself, and, instead of punishing Dick, had been content to show that he could have punished if he would.

"And now," said he, as he put on his jacket, "as you see that I can fight, perhaps you'll let me alone for the future. I shan't take things so patiently as I have done."

He set off to run home to dinner; and a glow of admiration went out after him from all that were unprejudiced. The boy had half won their hearts with his gallant bearing.

He appeared at his desk as usual in the afternoon. Dick Loftus was at his, a little sore about the arms. Suddenly, amidst the silence that follows the first settling down of a large number of students, a voice was heard.

"Who has done this?"

It came from Paradyne. He was standing with a paper of many sheets in his hand, and had spoken aloud in his shock of surprise. The paper was a Latin essay, to go in that night to the Head Master; it had taken him many days to write it.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Jebb.

Paradyne left his place and carried up the paper. It was torn, blotted, soaked in ink almost from beginning to end. The contents of one inkstand could scarcely have put it in the state it was.

"What *is* it?" cried Mr. Jebb, gazing at the black relic.

"It is my Latin essay, sir. I left it clean and perfect in my desk after morning school."

"Your Latin essay! You left it——

Nonsense, Paradyne," broke off Mr. Jebb, "you must have had an accident with it: you have been upsetting the ink."

The whole school was staring and wondering. On the merit of these essays was supposed to lie very much the decision of the Head Master, whether their author should or should not go up for the Oxford. The school denied all knowledge of the affair. The first desk, collectively and individually, protested they had had no hand in it, and a whisper arose that Paradyne had done it himself to hide the poorness of his Latin. There was no time to attempt another.

"He can't go up for the Oxford now," were the first words that greeted Paradyne's ears when the hall rose; and they came from Dick Loftus.

"Did *you* do it?" cried Paradyne, turning sharply upon him.

"No, I did not," answered Dick; his red face and his honest eyes raised fearlessly to Paradyne's. "You beat me this morning in

a fair, stand-up fight; but I'd scorn to do a mean trick of this sort."

"I believe you," said Paradyne, "and I beg your pardon for asking."

"And I am sorry that you should lose your chance for the Oxford," added Dick, not to be outdone in generosity. "I have never said either, as some of them do, that you ought not to go up for the Orville: it's as fair for you to compete as for the rest, for what I see."

But all chance for Paradyne, either for the one or the other, was over, in the opinion of the school.

Some of the better-natured felt sorry for him, and said it. Paradyne bore himself bravely before them; not a cloud on his brow, not a shadow on his lips, proclaimed aloud the bitterness of his defeat. But, later, when he was sitting at Mr. Henry's, he astonished that gentleman not a little by bursting into tears.

"I had taken such pride in that essay! I had looked forward to this examination with

so much certainty of success. And now to have it all destroyed in a moment!"

"Hush, George! You may go up yet."

"No, I shall not; I can see that Brabazon thinks I did it myself. I might just as well never have worked on for the examination; I'd better not have come to Orville. It's awful treachery!" he burst forth presently, his tone changing as anger superseded the sobs. "I know this has been done by some of them. Oh, what a life it is to lead! And there's another thing—the mother has been counting on my success."

There were rare times and seasons when Mr. Henry was so utterly dispirited himself, that it seemed like a mockery to attempt to impart consolation or preach of patience to another. This was one. The trouble lay heavier on him than it did on the boy. As he sat alone, after George's departure, and took up the Book; more, it must be confessed, from custom that night than from any comfort he thought to find—for, in truth, he felt entirely beaten down, worn, sick, weary;

it opened of itself at a part that seemed—ay, that seemed to have been written expressly for him.

"My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble."

And by the time he had read on to the end of the chapter, which is the Second of Ecclesiasticus, peace and trust had come back to him.

END OF VOL. I.

WYMAN AND SONS, PRINTERS, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LONDON, W.C.